

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM

THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

TO THE

RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN MDCCCXV

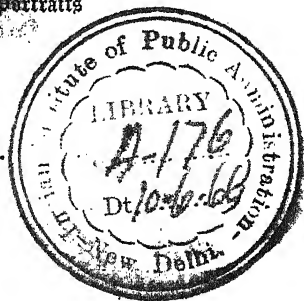
BY

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER XX.

RISE OF NAPOLEON, AND CAMPAIGN OF 1796 IN ITALY.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE was born at Ajaccio, in Corsica, on the 5th February 1768.* The Duke of Wellington was born in the year after, which Napoleon subsequently assumed as that of his nativity, in order to constitute himself a French citizen. "Providence," said Louis XVIII., "owed us that counterpoise." His family, though noble, had not been distinguished, and had suffered severely from misfortune. He was too great a man to attempt to derive distinction from any adventitious advantages which did not really belong to him, and could afford to discard all the lustre of patrician descent. When the Emperor of Austria endeavoured, after he became his son-in-law, to trace his connexion with some of the obscure

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I.
Parentage
and family
of Napoleon.

* He entered the world on 5th February 1768, and subsequently gave out that he was born in August 1769, as, in the interim, Corsica had been incorporated with the French monarchy.—ODELEBEN, i. 230, and *Histoire de France*, par M. SALGUES, i. 67. The record of his marriage with Josephine, which still exists in Paris, gives his birth as on 5th February 1768. It is as follows:—"2d Arrondissement de Paris. Acte de mariage de Napolione Bonaparte, général-en-chef de l'armée de l'intérieure, âgé de vingt-huit ans, né à Ajaccio, département de la Corse, domicilié à Paris, rue d'Antin, fils de Charles Bonaparte, rentier, et de Letzia Ramolini, son épouse,—Et de Marie Josephe Rose de Tascher, âgée de vingt-huit ans, née à l'île de Martinique, dans les îles du Vent, domiciliée à Paris, rue de Chantéraine, fille de Joseph Gaspard de Tascher capitaine de dragons, et de Rosa Claire des Vergers de Sanois, son épouse. Moi, Charles Théodore François Leclerc, officier public de l'état civil au second

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¹ Las Cas. i.
108, 112,
137. Bour.
i. 18, 23.
Salgues,
Mém. pour
servir à
l'Hist. de
France, i.
66.

2.

His mother,
and Napo-
leon's birth.

Dukes of Treviso, he answered that he was the Rudolph of Hapsburg of his family; and when the genealogists were engaged in deducing his descent from an ancient line of Gothic princes, he cut short their labours by declaring that his patent of nobility dated from the battle of Montenotte.¹

His mother, as in the case of many other eminent men of whom history has preserved a record, was distinguished by great beauty, and no common firmness and intrepidity of mind. She shared in the fatigues and dangers of her husband during the civil dissensions which distracted the island at the time of Napoleon's birth, and had recently before been engaged in some expeditions on horseback with him. His father died at the age of thirty-eight, of a cancer in the stomach, a complaint hereditary in his family, which also proved fatal to Napoleon himself; but the want of paternal care was more than supplied by his mother, to whose early education and solicitude he, in after life, mainly ascribed his elevation.* Though left a widow in the prime of life, she had already borne thirteen children, of whom five sons and three daughters survived their father. She lived to see one of them wearing the crown of Charlemagne, and another seated on the throne of Charles V. On the day of his birth she had been at church, and was seized with her pains during high mass.² She was brought home hastily, and, as there was not time to prepare a bed, was laid upon a couch covered with tapestry representing the heroes of the

² D'Abr. ii.
376, 377.
O'Meara, ii.
100. Las
Cas. i. 116,
117, 119,
120.

arrondissement municipal de Paris, après avoir fait lecture en présence des parties et témoins — 1^o de l'Acte de naissance de Napoléon Bonaparte, général, qui constate qu'il est né le 5 Février 1768, de légitime mariage de Charles Bonaparte et de Letzia Ramolini."†—The register bears the signatures, "Tallien, M. J. R. Tascher, P. Barras, Le Manois le jeune, Napoleone Bonaparte, Charles Leclercq, officier public."—See the whole extract in SALGUES, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de France*, i. 66, 67.

* "My opinion," said Napoleon, "is, that the future good or bad conduct of a child depends entirely on the mother."—O'MEARA, ii. 100.

† This official act, signed by Napoleon himself on an occasion when no one but a very young man represents himself as older than he really is, and when his interest lay the other way, as Corsica was not incorporated with France till June 1769, decides the matter.

Iliad, and there the future conqueror was brought into the world.

In the years of infancy he exhibited nothing remarkable, excepting irritability and turbulence of temper. But these qualities, as well as the decision with which they were accompanied, were so powerfully developed, that they gave him the entire command of his eldest brother Joseph, a boy of a mild and unassuming character, who was constantly beaten, pinched, or tormented by the future Emperor. But even at that early period it was observed that he never wept when chastised; and on one occasion, when he was only seven years of age, having been suspected unjustly of a fault, and punished when innocent, he endured the pain, and subsisted in disgrace for three days on the coarsest food, rather than betray his companion, who was really in fault. Though his anger was violent, it was generally of short endurance, and his smile from the first was like a beam of the sun emerging from the clouds. But, nevertheless, he gave no indications of extraordinary capacity at that early age; and his mother was frequently heard to declare that, of all her children, he was the one whom she would least have expected to have attained any extraordinary eminence. This is often observed of those destined for ultimate greatness; and the reason is, that they are reflecting rather than quick, and that their attention is fixed on things, which render a man eminent, rather than words, which make a schoolboy distinguished.¹

The winter residence of his father was usually at Ajaccio, the place of his birth, where there is still preserved a cannon, weighing about thirty pounds, the early plaything of Napoleon. But in summer the family retired to a dilapidated villa near the isle Sanguinière, once the residence of a relation of his mother's, situated in a romantic spot on the sea-shore. The house is approached by an avenue, overhung by the cactus and acacia, and other shrubs which grow luxuriantly in that

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3.
His early
character.

¹ D'Abr. i.
49, 52, 54.
Las Cas. i.
126.

4.
His resi-
dence and
habits when
in Corsica.

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¹ Benson's
Corsica, 4,
6. Scott, iii.
10.

5.
Removed
to the Military
School
at Brienne;
his character
there.

² Las Cas.
i. 127. Bour.
i. 22.

southern climate. It has a garden and a lawn, showing vestiges of neglected beauty, and surrounded by a shrubbery permitted to run to wilderness. There, enclosed by the cactus, the clematis, and the wild olive, is a singular and isolated granite rock, beneath which the remains of a small summer-house are still visible, the entrance to which is nearly closed by a luxuriant fig-tree. This was the favourite retreat of the young Napoleon, who early showed a love of solitary meditation, during the periods when the vacations at school permitted him to return home. We might suppose that there were perhaps formed those visions of ambition and high resolves, for which the limits of the world were ere long felt to be insufficient, did we not know that childhood can hardly anticipate the destiny of maturer years; and that, in Cromwell's words, a man never rises so high as when he does not know where his course is to terminate.¹

At an early age he was sent to the Military School, first of Angers, and latterly of Brienne. It is remarkable that the Duke of Wellington also learned the rudiments of the art of war at the first of these seminaries. His character there underwent a rapid alteration. He became thoughtful, studious, contemplative, and diligent in the extreme. His proficiency, especially in mathematics, was soon remarkable; but the quickness of his temper, though subdued, was not extinguished. On one occasion, having been subjected to a degrading punishment by his master, that of dining on his knees at the gate of the refectory, the mortification he experienced was so excessive, that it produced a violent vomiting and a universal tremor of the nerves.² But in the games of his companions he was inferior to none in spirit and agility, and already began to evince, in a decided predilection for military pursuits, the native basis of his mind. During the winter of 1783-4, so remarkable for its severity even in southern latitudes, the ordinary amusements of the boys without doors were completely stopped. Napoleon proposed to his com-

panions to beguile the weary hours by forming intrenchments and bastions of snow, with parapets, ravelins, and horn-works. The little army was divided into two parties, one of which was intrusted with the attack, the other with the defence of the works; and the mimic war was continued for several weeks, during which fractures and wounds were received on both sides. On another occasion, the wife of the porter of the school, well known to the boys for the fruit which she sold, having presented herself at the door of their theatre to be allowed to see the *Death of Cæsar*, which was to be played by the youths, and been refused an entrance, the sergeant at the door, induced by the vehemence of her manner, reported the matter to the young Napoleon, who was the boy in command on the occasion. "Remove that woman, who brings here the license of camps," said the future ruler of the Revolution.¹

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¹ Bour. i.
25, 28.

It was the fortune of the school at Brienne at this time to possess among its scholars, besides Napoleon, another boy, who rose to the highest eminence in the Revolution, PICHEGRU, afterwards conqueror of Holland. He was several years older than Napoleon, and instructed him in the elements of mathematics, and the first four rules of arithmetic. Pichegru early perceived the firm character of his little pupil; and when, many years afterwards, he had embraced the Royalist party, and it was proposed to him to sound Napoleon, then in the command of the army of Italy, he replied—"Don't waste time upon him: I have known him from his infancy; his character is inflexible; he has taken his side, and will never swerve from it." The fate of these two illustrious men afterwards rose in painful contrast to each other: Pichegru was strangled in a dungeon, when Napoleon was ascending the throne of France.²

6.
Pichegru
at the same
school.² Las Cas.
i. 128, 131.
O'Meara,
i. 240.

The speculations of Napoleon at this time were more devoted to political than military subjects. His habits were thoughtful and solitary; and his conversation, even

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7.
His early
subjects of
thought.

at that early age, was so remarkable for its reflection and energy that it attracted the notice of the Abbé Raynal, with whom he frequently lived during vacations, and who discoursed with him on government, legislation, and the relations of commerce. He was distinguished by his Italian complexion, his piercing look, and the decided style of his expression—a peculiarity frequently inducing a vehemence of manner, which rendered him not generally popular with his schoolfellows. The moment their play-time arrived, he flew to the library of the school, where he read with avidity the historical works of the ancients, particularly Polybius, Plutarch, and Arrian. His companions disliked him, on account of his not joining their games at these hours, and frequently rallied him on his name and Corsican birth. He often said to Bourrienne, his earliest friend, with much bitterness—"I hate these French—I will do them all the mischief in my power." Notwithstanding this, his animosity had nothing ungenerous in it; and when he was intrusted, in his turn, with the enforcing of any regulation which was infringed, he preferred going to prison to informing against the young delinquents.¹

¹ Bour. i.
27, 32, 33,
35. Las.
Cas. i. 136.
D'Abr. i.
111.

8.
His pro-
gress at
school.

Though his progress at school was respectable, it was not remarkable; and the notes transmitted to government in 1784 exhibited many other young men much more distinguished for their early proficiency. But from the very first he gave decided marks of the inflexibility of his temper. In the private instructions communicated to government by the masters of the establishment, he was characterised as of a "domineering, imperious, and headstrong disposition." During the vacations of school, he returned in general to Corsica, where he gave vent to the ardour of his mind, in traversing the mountains and valleys of that romantic island, and listening to the tales of feudal strife and family revenge by which its inhabitants are so remarkably distinguished. The celebrated Paoli, the hero of Corsica, accompanied him in some of

these excursions, and explained to him on the road the actions which he had fought, and the positions which he had occupied, during his struggle for the independence of the island. The energy and decision of his young companion at this period made a great impression on that illustrious man. "Oh! Napoleon," said he, "you do not resemble the moderns—you belong to the heroes of Plutarch."¹

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¹ Antom. ii.
147. Las
Cas. i. 136;
ii. 348.
Bour. i. 37,
38.

At the age of fourteen, he was sent from the school of Brienne to the Ecole Militaire at Paris, for the completion of his military studies. He had not been long there, when he was so much struck with the luxurious habits in which the young men were then brought up at that seminary, that he addressed an energetic memorial to the governor on the subject, strongly urging that, instead of having footmen and grooms to wait upon their orders, they should be taught to do every thing for themselves, and be inured to the hardships and privations which awaited them in real warfare. In the year 1785, at the age of seventeen, he received a commission in a regiment of artillery, and was soon promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, in a corps quartered at Valence. Shortly after, he gave a proof of the varied subjects which occupied his mind, by writing a History of Corsica, and an Essay for a prize, proposed by the Abbé Raynal, on the "Institutions most likely to contribute to Public Happiness." The premium was adjudged to the young soldier. These productions, as might have been expected, were distinguished by the revolutionary doctrines then generally prevalent, and were very different from his maturer speculations. The essay was recovered by Talleyrand after Napoleon was on the throne; but the moment the Emperor saw it he committed it to the flames.²

^{9.}
Is sent to
the Ecole
Militaire
at Paris.
Enters the
army.

² O'Meara,
ii. 168, 169.
Las Cas. i.
43, 136, 141.
Bour. i. 44.
D'Abr. i. 76.

At this period, Napoleon was generally disliked by his companions: he was considered as proud, haughty, and irascible; but with the few whose conversation he valued, and whose friendship he chose to cultivate, he was already a favourite, and high expectations began to be formed of

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10.

Progress
and develop-
ment of his
character
there.1 D'Abr. i.
111. Las
Cas. i. 140,
141.

the future eminence to which he might rise. His powers of reasoning were especially remarkable ; his expressions lucid and energetic ; his knowledge and information immense, considering his years and the opportunities of study which he had enjoyed. Logical accuracy was the great characteristic of his mind ; and his subsequent compositions have abundantly proved that, if he had not become the first conqueror, he would have been one of the greatest writers, as he assuredly was one of the most profound thinkers, of modern times.¹

11.

His personal
appearance
at that time.

His figure, always diminutive, was at that period thin and meagre in the highest degree—a circumstance which, with his sallow and lank visage, rendered his appearance somewhat ridiculous when he first assumed the military dress. Mademoiselle Permon, afterwards Duchess of Abrantes, one of his earliest female acquaintances, and who afterwards became one of the most brilliant wits of the imperial court, mentions that he came to their house on the day on which he first put on his uniform, in the highest spirits, as is usual with young men on such an occasion : but her sister, who had just left her boarding-school, was so struck with his comical appearance, in the enormous boots which were at that period worn by the artillery, which he had entered, that she immediately burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, saying he resembled nothing so much as Puss in Boots. The stroke told ; the libel was too true not to be felt : but Napoleon soon recovered his good humour, and, a few days afterwards, presented her with an elegantly bound copy of Puss in Boots, as a proof that he retained no rancour on account of her raillery.²

2 D'Abr. i.
113.

12.

He espouses
with his
regiment
the cause of
the Revolution.

When the Revolution broke out, he adhered, like almost all the young officers of subaltern rank, to the popular side, and continued a warm patriot during the whole time of the Constituent Assembly. But, on the appointment of the Legislative Assembly, he has himself declared that his sentiments underwent a rapid change ; and he soon

imbibed, under the Reign of Terror, that profound hatred of the Jacobins which his subsequent life so strongly evinced, and which he never, even for the purposes of ambition, made any attempt to disguise. It was his fortune to witness both the mob which inundated the Tuileries on the 20th June, and that which overturned the throne on the 10th August; and on both occasions he strongly expressed his sense of the ruinous consequences likely to arise from the want of resolution in the government. No man knew better the consequences of yielding to popular clamour, or how rapidly it is checked by proper firmness in the depositaries of power. From the weakness shown on the 20th June, he predicted the disastrous effects which so speedily followed on the next great revolt of the populace. When he saw the monarch, in obedience to the rabble, put on the red cap, his indignation knew no bounds. "How on earth," he exclaimed, "could they let those wretches enter the palace! They should have cut down four or five hundred with grape-shot, and the rest would speedily have taken to flight."¹

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The first military exploit of Napoleon was in his native country. The disturbances in Corsica having led the revolutionary forces into that island, he was despatched from Bastia, in spring 1793, to surprise his native city of Ajaccio, and succeeded in making himself master of a tower called the Torre di Capitello, in its vicinity, where he was shortly afterwards besieged, and compelled to evacuate it. Thus, like Frederick of Prussia, and Wellington, his first essay in arms proved unfortunate. His talents, and the high character which he had received from the masters of the military academy, ere long, however, led to a more important employment. At the siege of Toulon, the artillery, after the operations had advanced a considerable length, was intrusted to his direction, and he soon communicated a new impulse to the hitherto languishing progress of the siege. By his advice,

¹ Bour. i. 49.
Las Cas. i.
146.

13.
His first
services in
Corsica, and
at the siege
of Toulon.
His first
acquaintance
with Junot.

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the attack was changed from the body of the place to the forts on the *Hauteur de Grasse*, and on the Mountain of Faron, which proved so successful, that the siege, which before his arrival was on the point of being abandoned in despair, was speedily crowned with complete success. During this operation, he was first struck by the firmness and intrepidity of a young corporal of artillery, whom he immediately recommended for promotion. Having occasion to send a despatch from the trenches, he called for some person who could write, that he might dictate the order. A young soldier stepped from the ranks, and, resting the paper on the breastwork, began to write as he dictated, when a shot from the enemy's batteries struck the ground close to him, and covered the paper with earth. "Thank you," said the soldier; "we shall have no occasion for sand on this page." Napoleon asked him what he could do for him. "Every thing," replied the young private, blushing with emotion, and touching his left shoulder with his hand—"you can turn this worsted into an epaulet." A few days after, Napoleon sent for the same soldier to order him to reconnoitre in the enemy's trenches, and recommended that he should disguise himself, for fear of his being discovered. "Never," replied he. "Do you take me for a spy? I will go in my uniform, though I should never return." And in effect he set out instantly, dressed as he was, and had the good fortune to come back unhurt. Napoleon immediately recommended him for promotion, and never lost sight of his courageous secretary. He was JUNOT, afterwards Marshal of France, and Duke of Abrantes. So strongly did Napoleon's character impress Junot at that time, that he quitted his regiment to devote himself to his fortunes as aide-de-camp, and wrote to his father in 1794, in answer to his inquiries, what sort of young man he was to whom he had attached himself,—“He is one of those men of whom nature is sparing, and whom she does not throw upon the earth but with centuries between them.”¹

¹ Scott, iii.
21. Duchess
D'Abr. ii.
191. Las
Cas. i. 166.
Nap. i. 10,
13.

On another occasion, an artilleryman having been shot while loading a gun, he took up the dead man's ramrod, and with his own hands served the piece for a considerable time. He first took notice, at the same siege, of another young soldier, named DUROC, whom he never afterwards lost sight of, made Marshal of the Palace, and ever treated with the most unlimited confidence, till he was killed by his side the day after the battle of Bautzen. Duroc loved Napoleon for himself, and possessed, perhaps, a larger share of his confidence than any of his other generals; and none knew so well, in after years, how to let the first ebullitions of the Imperial wrath escape without producing fatal effects, and allowing the better judgment of his sovereign to resume its sway in cooler moments. The reputation which Napoleon acquired from the successful issue of this siege was very great. All the generals, representatives, and soldiers, who had heard the advice which he gave at the councils, three months before the capture of the town, and witnessed his activity at the works, anticipated a future career of glory to the young officer. Dugommier wrote to the Committee of Public Salvation in these words:—"Reward and promote that young man; for if you are ungrateful towards him, he will raise himself alone."¹

This success procured for Napoleon the command of the artillery of the army of Italy during the campaign of 1794. Dumorbion, who was advanced in years, submitted all the operations to a council of younger officers, among whom Napoleon and Massena soon acquired a decided lead; and the former, from the force of superior talents, gradually came to direct the whole operations of the campaign. It was his ability which procured for the French armies the capture of Saorgio, the Col de Tende, and all the higher chain of the Maritime Alps. These successes awakened in his ardent mind those lofty visions of ambition which he was so soon destined to realise.² One night, in June 1794, he spent on the summit of the Col de

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14.

And with
Duroc.
His increas-
ing reputa-
tion.¹ Las Cas. i.
163, and ii.
156, 157.
D'Abr. ii.
193. Scott,
iii. 35.

15.

Is attached
to Dumor-
bion's army
in the Mari-
time Alps.² Nap. iii.
15, 26, 34.

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Tende, from whence at sunrise he beheld with delight the blue plains of Italy, already to his prophetic eye the theatre of glorious achievement.

16.
Sent to
Genoa, and
refuses the
command of
the National
Guard of
Paris.

In July 1794, Napoleon was sent by the commissioners of the Convention to Genoa upon a secret mission, in which he was connected with Robespierre's brother, then intrusted with the supreme command at Toulon. This mission saved his life; the younger Robespierre, for whom, at that period, he had conceived the highest admiration, earnestly entreated Napoleon, instead of going, to accompany him to Paris, whither he was returning to support his brother; but he was inflexible in his refusal. Had he yielded, he would infallibly have shared the fate of both; and the destinies of Europe might have been changed. The situation he was offered was that of Henriot, commander of the national guard, of whose capacity the Committee of Public Salvation had become somewhat doubtful. It was brilliant enough, however, in those days to awaken the ambition of his brothers Joseph and Lucien, who urged him to close with the offer. "No," said Napoleon, "I will not accept it: this is not a time to play the enthusiast; it is no easy matter to save your head at Paris. Robespierre the younger is an honourable man, but his brother is no trifler; if I went to Paris, I should be obliged to serve him. Me serve such a man! Never. I am not ignorant of the service I might be of in replacing that imbecile commander of the national guard of Paris, but I do not choose to do so; this is not the time for engaging in such an undertaking. What could I do in that huge galley? At present there is no honourable place for one but the army; but have patience,—*the time is coming when I shall rule Paris.*"¹

¹ Lucien
Buonaparte,
Mém. i. 56,
57.

As it was, Napoleon was exposed, from his connexion with these leaders, to no inconsiderable dangers even on his Italian mission. Within a month after, he was, in consequence of the fall of Robespierre, with whom he had been in close correspondence, arrested by the new

commissioners whom the Thermidorian party sent out to the army of Italy, and made a narrow escape with his life. He addressed, upon his seizure, an energetic remonstrance to the commissioners, remarkable for the strong sense, condensed thought, and powerful expression which it contains ; while his friend Junot was so penetrated with grief at his misfortune, that he wrote to them, protesting his innocence, and imploring to be allowed to share his captivity. These applications were attended with complete success ; a fortnight afterwards, he was provisionally set at liberty, and immediately returned to Paris. He was there offered a command in la Vendée ; and, having declined it, he was deprived of his rank as a general officer, and reduced to private life.¹

The period which now intervened, from the dismissal of Napoleon to the attack of the sections on the Convention, in October 1795, he has himself described as the happiest in his life. Living almost without money, on the bounty of his friends, in coffeehouses and theatres, his ardent imagination dwelt incessantly on the future ; and visions floated across his mind, tinged with those bright colours in which the eye of youthful genius arrays the path of life—a striking proof of the dependence of happiness on the mind itself, and the slight influence which even the greatest external success has in replenishing the secret fountains from which the joys or sorrows of existence are drawn. During these days of visionary romance he dwelt with peculiar pleasure on the idea, which had even then become a favourite one, of repairing to Constantinople, and offering his services to the Grand Signior, under the impression that things were too stable in the Western World, and that it was in the East alone that those great revolutions were to be effected which at once immortalise the names of their authors. He even went so far as to prepare, and address to the French government, a memorial, in which he offered, with a few officers who were willing to follow his fortunes, to go to

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17.

He is arrested and liberated, and returns to Paris.
6th Aug. 1794.

20th Aug.

15th Sept.
¹ Bour. i. 60,
61, 69, 70.
LasCas. 167.
D'Abr. ii.
194. Nap.
iii. 15, 26,
34.

18.

His subsequent life in Paris.

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¹ O'Meara,
ii. 155. *Las*
Cas. i. 172.
Bour. i. 72,
76.

^{19.}
His desti-
tute condi-
tion there.

Turkey, to organise its forces against Russia—a proposal which, if acceded to, might perhaps have changed the fate of the world. This impression never forsook him through life ; it was, even more than the destruction of British commerce, the secret motive of the expedition to Moscow : even after all the glories of his subsequent career, he looked back with regret to these early visions, and, when speaking of Sir Sidney Smith and the check at Acre, repeatedly said—"That man made me miss my destiny."¹

So low, however, were the fortunes of the future emperor fallen at that period, that he was frequently indebted to his friends for a meal, which he could not afford to purchase himself. At one time, his fortune being reduced to *five francs*, he went out to the quays of Paris, intending to throw himself into the river ; from which he was only diverted by the generosity of a friend, who, in the midst of his anguish, presented him with a large sum of money.* His brother Lucien and he brought the black bread received in their rations to Madame Bourrienne, and received in exchange loaves of white flour, which she had clandestinely, and at the hazard of her life, received during the law of the maximum from a neighbouring confectioner. At this period she lodged in a new house in the Rue des Marais. Napoleon was very anxious to hire, with the assistance of his uncle, afterwards Cardinal Fesch, the one opposite. "With that house," said he, "the society of yourself, a few friends, and a cabriolet, I should be the happiest of men."² In those days Napoleon wore the gray great-coat, which has since become more celebrated than the white plume of Henry IV. ; he had no gloves, for, as he said himself, they were a useless expense ; his boots, ill made, were seldom blackened ; his yellow visage, meagre countenance, and severe physiognomy, gave as little indication of his future appear-

² *Bour.* i.
76, 81, 86.

* Demasis was this generous friend : he gave him 30,000 francs in gold, with which he relieved the distresses of his family.—See MONTHOLON, *Captivité de Ste Hélène*, ii. 33, 34.

ance as his fortunes did of his future destiny. Salicetti had been the author of his arrest. "He did me all the mischief in his power," said Napoleon, "but *my star* would not permit him to prevail,"¹—so early had the idea of a brilliant destiny taken possession of his mind. He afterwards made a generous return to his enemy : Salicetti was ordered to be arrested by the Convention after the condemnation of Romme and the Jacobin conspirators, and he was concealed in the house of the mother of the future Duchess of Abrantes. Napoleon learned the secret in consequence of a love-intrigue between his valet and their maid ; but he concealed his knowledge, facilitated his enemy's escape, and sent a letter to him on the road, informing him of the return he had made for his malevolence.²

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¹ D'Abr. i.
255, 256.² Bour. i.
76, 81, 86.
D'Abr. i.
255, 256.

But another destiny awaited the young soldier. The approaching conflict of the Convention with the sections was the first circumstance which raised him from the obscurity into which he had recently fallen. His great abilities being known to several persons of influence in the government, especially Carnot, he was, on the first appearance of the approaching struggle, taken into the confidence of the Committee of Public Salvation, and had been consulted by them for some months before the contest began. When the attack by Menou on the section Lepelletier failed, Napoleon was sent for. He found the Convention in the utmost agitation ; and measures of accommodation with the insurgents were already talked of, when his firmness and decision saved the government. He painted in such vivid colours the extreme peril of sharing the supreme authority between the military commander and three commissioners of the Convention, that the Committee agreed to appoint Barras commander-in-chief, and Napoleon second in command. No sooner was this done than he despatched at midnight a chef d'escadron, named Murat, with three hundred horse, to seize the park of artillery lying at Sablons. He arrived a few minutes before the troops of the Sections, who came to obtain them

20.
Receives the
command
from the
Directory,
on the 13th
Vendemi-
aire.

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for the insurgents ; and, by this decisive step, put at the disposal of government those formidable batteries, which next day spread death through the ranks of the national guard, and at one blow extinguished the revolt. Barras declared in his report, that it was to Napoleon's skilful disposition of the posts round the Tuileries that the success of the day was owing : but he himself never ceased to lament, that his first success in separate command should have been gained in civil dissension ; and often said, in after times, that he would give many years of his life to tear that page from his history.¹

¹ Bour. i. 90.
96. Nap. iii.
67, 74.

21.
His ready
popular wit.

Though not gifted with the powers of popular oratory, Napoleon was not destitute of that ready talent which catches the idea most likely to divert the populace, and frequently disarms them even in the moment of their greatest irritation. When in command in Paris, after the suppression of the revolt, he was frequently brought into collision with the people in a state of the utmost excitement ; and on these occasions his presence of mind was as conspicuous as his humanity was admirable. Above a hundred families, during the dreadful famine which followed the suppression of the revolt of the sections in the winter 1795-6, were saved from death by his beneficence. On one occasion, he was trying to appease a mob in a state of extreme irritation, when a fat woman, bursting from the throng, exclaimed, " These wearers of epaulets, provided they fill their own skins, care not though the poor die of famine."—" My good woman," said Napoleon, who at that time was exceedingly thin, " look at me, and say which of us has fed the best." This at once turned the laugh on his side, and he continued his route without interruption.²

² Las Cas.
ii. 173.
D'Abr. ii.
28.

JOACHIM MURAT, who was, by a singular coincidence, thus associated with Napoleon in his first important command, was born on 25th March 1771, at la Bastede, near Cahors, in Languedoc, where his father was an innkeeper. His bold and turbulent disposition early gave him a

distaste for letters : he was soon taken from school, where he was making no progress ; and the future King of Naples began life as an assistant to the waiter in his father's hotel. He afterwards enlisted in the Chasseurs of Ardennes ; but having fallen into a scrape, he deserted his regiment, and repaired to Paris, where he got employment again as a waiter at a humble restaurateur's. There his activity, address, and elegant figure, having attracted notice, he was offered a situation, in 1792, in the constitutional guard of Louis XVI. On its being disbanded, he was appointed sub-lieutenant in the eleventh regiment of Chasseurs-à-cheval of the line, and soon made himself remarkable by the daring of his character, and the ultra-revolutionary sentiments which he uttered — qualities which, in those days of democratic turmoil, procured for him rapid advancement. He was already lieutenant-colonel, in command of his regiment at Abbeville, when, on the assassination of Marat, in 1793, by Charlotte Corday, he wrote to the Jacobin Club, that he intended, from admiration of the illustrious deceased, to change his name to Marat. His extreme principles were so well known that, after the 9th Thermidor, during the reaction against the Reign of Terror, he was deprived of his command, and came to Paris, where, like Napoleon, he lived an idle life, dreaming away the time in great poverty in coffeehouses. This continued till the revolt of the sections, when he volunteered his services to the government, and powerfully contributed, by the prompt seizure of the artillery at Sablons, to the decisive success which they obtained.

The sketch of this celebrated man given by the master-hand of Napoleon, will serve at once to furnish a key to his actions, and prepare the reader to follow his achievements with interest. "Murat," said he, "was a most singular character. He loved, I may rather say, adored me : with me he was my right arm ; without me he was nothing. Order Murat to attack and destroy four or five thousand men in such a direction, it was done in a

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22.

Early his-
tory of
Murat.23.
Outline of
his charac-
ter.

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moment ; leave him to himself, he was an *imbecile* without judgment. In battle he was, perhaps, the bravest man in the world : his boiling courage carried him into the midst of the enemy, covered with plumes and glittering with gold ; how he escaped was a miracle, for, from being so distinguished a mark, every one fired at him. The Cossacks admired him on account of his excessive bravery. Every day Murat was engaged in single combat with some of them, and returned with his sabre dripping with the blood of those he had slain. He was a Paladin in the field ; but in the cabinet destitute of either decision or judgment.”¹

¹ O'Meara,
ii. 96.

24.
Napoleon's
marriage
with Jose-
phine.

The next event in Napoleon's career was not less important on his ultimate fortunes. On occasion of the general disarming of the inhabitants of Paris, after the overthrow of the sections, a boy of ten years of age came to request from Napoleon, who was appointed General of the Interior after this success, that his father's sword, which had been delivered up, should be restored to him. His name was EUGENE BEAUHARNAIS ; and Napoleon was so much struck by his appearance, and the earnestness with which he enforced his request, that he was induced not only to comply with the request, but to visit his mother, the Countess Josephine Beauharnais. Her husband, Count Alexander Beauharnais, had been one of the most elegant dancers of his day, and from that accomplishment was frequently honoured with the hand of Marie Antoinette at the court balls at Versailles. Napoleon, whose inclination already began to revert to the manners of the old regime, used to look around, during his evening visits to the countess his widow, if the windows were closed, and say, “Now let us talk of the old court ; let us make a tour to Versailles.” From thence arose the intimacy which led to his marriage with that lady, and ultimately placed her on the throne of France.²

² Las Cas. i.
173; ii. 190,
191. D'Abr.
iii. 314.
Nap. i. 72.
Scott, iii. 80.

Her history had been very remarkable. She was born in the West Indies ; and it had early been prophe-

sied, by an old negress, that she should lose her first husband, be extremely unfortunate, but that she should afterwards be greater than a queen.* This prophecy, the authenticity of which is placed beyond a doubt, was fulfilled in the most singular manner. Her first husband, Count Alexander Beauharnais, a general in the army on the Rhine, had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, solely on account of his belonging to the nobility; and she herself, who was also imprisoned at the same time, was only saved from impending death by the fall of Robespierre. So strongly was the prophecy impressed on her mind, that, while lying in the dungeons of the Conciergerie, expecting every hour to be summoned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, she mentioned it to her fellow-prisoners, and, to amuse them, named some of them as ladies of the bedchamber; a jest which she afterwards lived to realise to one of their number.†

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25.

Her history, and remarkable adventure at the fall of Robespierre.

¹ Mém. de Joséphine, par Mad. Crevier, i. 251, 252, 253. Scott, iii. 82. Las Cas. i. 173, and ii. 190, 191. D'Abr. iii. 314. Nap. i. 72.

Josephine possessed all the qualities fitted to excite admiration. Graceful in her manners, affectionate in her disposition, easy in temper, elegant in appearance, she was qualified both to awaken the love and form the

26.

Her character.

* The author heard this prophecy in 1801, long before Napoleon's elevation to the throne, from the late Countess of Bath, and the late Countess of Ancrum, who were educated in the same convent with Josephine, and had repeatedly heard her mention the circumstance in early youth.

† Josephine herself narrated this extraordinary passage in her life in the following terms:—

“One morning the jailer entered the chamber where I slept with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and two other ladies, and told me he was going to take my mattress to give it to another prisoner. ‘Why,’ said Madame d'Aiguillon eagerly, ‘will not Madame de Beauharnais obtain a better one?’—‘No, no,’ replied he, with a fiendish smile, ‘she will have no need of one; for she is about to be led to the Conciergerie, and thence to the guillotine.’

“At these words my companions in misfortune uttered piercing shrieks. I consoled them as well as I could; and at length, worn out with their eternal lamentations, I told them that their grief was utterly unreasonable; that not only I should not die, but live to be Queen of France. ‘Why, then, do you not name your maids of honour?’ said Madame d'Aiguillon, irritated at such expressions at such a moment. ‘Very true,’ said I; ‘I did not think of that;—well, my dear, I make you one of them.’ Upon this the tears of these ladies fell apace, for they never doubted I was mad. But the truth was, I was not gifted with any extraordinary courage, but internally persuaded of the truth of the oracle.

“Madame d'Aiguillon soon after became unwell, and I drew her towards

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happiness of the young general whose fate was now united with her own. She was never possessed of regular beauty, and, when united to Napoleon, was past her first youth, being above thirty years of age. But she was grace personified; her taste in dress was exquisite, and no one made so much of the physical advantages which yet remained to her. Her influence in subsequent times, when placed on the throne, was never exerted but for the purposes of humanity; her failings, for she had some, were redeemed by the readiness with which she gave ear to the tale of suffering. Napoleon himself said, after he had tasted of all the greatness of the world, that the chief happiness he had known in life had flowed from her affection.* These good and amiable qualities were not without a mixture of feminine passions and weakness. She was passionately fond of dress—a failing which, when her husband rose to greatness, led her into excessive extravagance; and her carelessness and ease of temper during her widowhood, had led her frequently into doubtful society and habits, during the profligacy which followed the Reign of Terror.¹ After her marriage

¹ Bour. i. 101; viii. 372. Scott, iii. 83. Hist. du Direct. i. 191.

the window, which I opened, to admit through the bars a little fresh air: I there perceived a poor woman who knew us, and who was making a number of signs, which at first I could not understand. She constantly held up her gown (*robe*;) and seeing that she had some object in view, I called out '*robe*;' to which she answered 'yes.' She then lifted up a stone and put it in her lap, which she lifted up a second time; I called out '*pierre*;' upon which she evinced the greatest joy at perceiving that her signs were understood. Joining, then, the stone to her robe, she eagerly imitated the motion of cutting off the head, and immediately began to dance, and evince the most extravagant joy. This singular pantomime awakened in our minds a vague hope that possibly Robespierre might be no more.

"At this moment, when we were vacillating between hope and fear, we heard a great noise in the corridor, and the terrible voice of our jailer, who said to his dog, giving him at the same time a kick, 'Get on, you cursed Robespierre!' That coarse phrase at once taught us that we had nothing to fear, and that France was saved."—*Mem. de Joséphine*, i. 252, 253.

* "Josephine," said Napoleon, "was grace personified. Every thing she did was with a grace and delicacy peculiar to herself. I never saw her act inelegantly the whole time we lived together. Her toilet was a perfect arsenal; and she effectually defended herself against the assaults of time."—O'MEARA, ii. 101. Being some years older than her husband, she took this method, like many others of her sex, of concealing the advances of time—"Annos celans elegantia."

with Napoleon had fixed her destinies in an exalted station, she still retained the levity of manner and spirit of coquetry which she had then acquired, and sometimes, though without any real foundation at that time, excited furious fits of jealousy in his breast.

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In the first instance, however, motives of ambition combined with a softer feeling to fix Napoleon's choice. Madame Beauharnais had formed an intimacy in prison with Madame de Fontenai, the eloquent and beautiful mistress of Tallien, who afterwards became his wife ; and the former was, during those days of universal dissoluteness of manners, a great favourite of Barras, at that period the leading character of the Directory. With his usual volatility, however, he was not sorry of an opportunity of establishing her in marriage with the young general, after the first novelty of the intimacy was over.¹ His influence, after the fall of Robespierre, promised to be of essential importance to the rising officer. Napoleon married her on the 9th March 1796 ; he himself being in his twenty-eighth year, and she several years older. At the same time he laid before the Directory a plan for the Italian campaign, so remarkable for its originality and genius, as to attract the special notice of the illustrious Carnot, then minister-at-war. The united influence of these two directors, and the magnitude of the obligation which Napoleon had conferred upon them by his decisive victory over the sections, prevailed. With Josephine he received the command of the Italian armies, and, twelve days after, set out for the Alps—taking with him two thousand louis-d'or for the service of the campaign, the whole specie which the treasury could furnish. The instructions of the Directory were, to do all in his power to revolutionise Piedmont, and so intimidate the other Italian powers ; to violate the neutrality of Genoa ; seize the forts of Savona ; compel the senate of Genoa to furnish him with pecuniary supplies, and to surrender the keys of Gavi, a fortress perched on a

27.
Marries
her, and
receives the
command of
the army
of Italy.

¹ Hard. iii.
301.

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¹ Hard. iii.
302, 303.
Las Cas. i.
173. Bour.
i. 103.
Scott, iii. 83,
84. Hist.
du Direct.
i. 227.

rocky height, commanding the pass of the Bochetta. In case of refusal, he was directed to carry it by assault. His powers were limited to military operations, and the Directory reserved to themselves the exclusive right of concluding treaties of peace or truce — a limitation which was speedily disregarded by the enterprising genius of the young conqueror.¹

ITALY,

———“il bel paese
Che l'Appenin parte, et il mar circonda, et l'Alpe,”*

28.
Physical description of
Italy: the
plain of
Lombardy.

is divided by nature into three great districts, essentially different from each other, and yet distinguished by indelible features from every other country in Europe. The first contains the noble plain, watered by the Po, which stretches from the southern base of the Alps to the northern declivity of the Apennines, and extends from Coni on the west to the Adriatic on the east. This noble plain, which is three hundred miles in length by a hundred and twenty in breadth, is, beyond all question, the richest and most fertile in Europe. On the west it is sheltered by a vast semicircle of mountains, which there unite the Alps and Apennines, and are surmounted by glittering piles of ice and snow, forming the majestic barrier between France and Italy. In those inexhaustible reservoirs, which the heat of summer converts into perennial fountains of living water, the Po takes its rise; and that classic stream, rapidly fed by the confluence of the torrents which descend through every cleft and valley in the vast circumference, is already a great river when it sweeps under the ramparts of Turin. This immense surface, formerly submerged over its whole extent by water, is a perfect level; you may travel two hundred miles in a straight line in it without coming to a natural eminence ten feet high. Towards its western

* ———“The beauteous land

Which the Apennine divides, and the sea surrounds, and the Alps.”

end, the soil, chiefly composed of the debris brought down from the adjacent mountains, is for the most part sandy or gravelly ; but it becomes richer as you advance with the course of the Po to the eastward, and the plain from Lodi to Ferrara is composed of the finest alluvial soil, generally thirty-five or forty feet in thickness. This magnificent expanse, the garden of Europe, is watered by numerous rivers, the Tessino, the Adda, the Adige, the Tagliamento, and the Piave, which, descending from the snowy summits of the Alps, fall perpendicularly into the line of the Po ; while the Taro and other lesser streams, flowing on the southern side into the same river, from the lower ridges of the Apennines, afford equally to all parts of the plain the means of extensive irrigation — the only requisite in that favoured region for the production of the richest pastures and most luxuriant harvests.¹

It is hard to say whether the cultivation of the soil, the riches of nature, or the structures of human industry, in this beautiful region, are most to be admired. An unrivalled system of agriculture, from which every nation in Europe might take a lesson, has been long established over its whole surface, and two, sometimes three, successive crops annually reward the labours of the husbandman. Indian corn is produced in abundance, and, by its return, quadruple that of wheat, affords subsistence for a numerous and dense population. Rice is cultivated to a great extent in the marshy districts ; and an incomparable system of irrigation, diffused over the whole, conveys the waters of the Alps by an endless series of little canals, like the veins and arteries in the human body, to every field, and in some places to every ridge, in the grass lands. It is in these rich meadows, stretching round Lodi, and from thence to Verona, that the celebrated Parmesan cheese, known over all Europe for the richness of its flavour, is made. The vine and the olive thrive on the sunny slopes which ascend from this plain to the ridges of the Alps ; and a woody zone of never-failing

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¹ Personal observation. Châteauvieux, Agriculture d'Italie, 12. Young's Travels, ii. 67, 75.

29.
Physical qualities of the first region.

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beauty lies between the desolation of the mountain and the fertility of the plain. But the climate is severe in winter, and the orange and citron are chilled by the blasts which descend from the frozen glaciers. The cities of this district, both in ancient and modern times, have been worthy, alike in grandeur and opulence, of the luxuriant plain by which they are surrounded. Mantua boasts of the residence of Virgil, Padua of having been the birthplace of Livy, Arqua of the tomb of Petrarch. Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Canova, have adorned these cities by their works, or immortalised them by their birth; and the stately edifices of Turin, Milan, Bologna, Parma, Verona, and Venice, still attract the learned and ardent from every part of Europe, though their political independence has been extinguished, and their literary celebrity consists rather in the recollection of past than the greatness of present genius.¹

¹ Malte-
Brun, vii.
204, 207.
Personal
observation.

30.
Character of
the second
region.

The second region, totally different in character from the former, extends over all the ramifications and declivities of the Apennines that vast range which, branching off from the Alps in the neighbourhood of Genoa, runs down the whole centre of Italy south of the plain of Lombardy, from the frontiers of Provence to the extremity of Calabria. This great chain, in its central and highest parts, rises to the height of more than seven thousand feet above the sea; but in general the elevation is less considerable, and seldom reaches in the centre of the ridge above six thousand feet. It is not one simple central ridge of mountains, having a broad belt of level country on either side between it and the sea; nor is it a chain rising abruptly, like the Andes in South America, from the ocean on one side, so as to leave space for an ample extent of plain on the other, in which the rivers, descending from its summits, may become great and navigable. It is, like all the other chains which branch off from the great stony girdle of the Old World, a huge backbone, thickly set with spines of unequal length, some running

parallel to each other, others twisted and interlaced in the strangest imaginable manner. As if to complete the disorder in those spots where the spines of the Apennines, being contorted, run parallel to their own central chain and thus leave a level plain between their base and the sea, volcanic agency has broken in, and filled up the space thus left with clusters of hills or lofty mountains of its own formation, as is the case with the Alban Mount near Rome, and Vesuvius in the neighbourhood of Naples. Generally speaking, then, Italy, to the south of the plain of Lombardy, is composed of an infinite variety of valleys pent in between high and steep hills, each forming a country to itself, and separated by rugged natural barriers from the others.¹

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¹ Arnold's
Lectures on
History,
165. Personal
observation.

If the climate of the country were more rigorous, this rugged and woody region, spreading, as it does, over three-fourths of its whole extent, would for the most part be composed, like the Doverfelt of Norway, or the Grampians of Scotland, of cold and cheerless hills, tenanted only by the roe and the heath-fowl. But, under the blue heavens and delightful sun of Italy, the case is very different. Vegetable productions, capable of yielding ample food for man, and in far greater variety than in the plain, are reared with ease in every part of the varied ascent, from the base to the summit of the mountains. The olive, the vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, the sweet chestnut, the peach and nectarine, with all the fruits of northern climates, flourish in the utmost luxuriance on the sunny slopes of Tuscany, and in the Roman States; while in Naples and Calabria, in addition to these, are to be found the orange-tree, the citron, the prickly pear, the prickly cactus, the palm-tree, and the fruits and flowers of tropical regions. An admirable terrace-cultivation, where art and industry have combined to overcome the obstacles of nature, has every where converted the slopes, naturally sterile and arid, into a succession of gardens, loaded with the

^{31.}
Productions
of nature in
the mountain
region.

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choicest vegetable productions. A delicious climate there brings the finest fruits to maturity; the grapes hang in festoons from tree to tree; the song of the nightingale is heard in every grove; all nature seems to rejoice in the paradise which the industry of man has created.* To this incomparable system of horticulture, which appears to have been unknown to the ancient Romans, and to have been introduced into Europe by the warriors who returned from the Crusades, the riches and smiling aspect of Tuscany, and the mountain-region of Italy, are chiefly to be ascribed; for nothing can be more desolate by nature than the waterless declivities, in general almost destitute of soil, on which it has been formed.¹

¹ Sismondi,
Agric. de
Toscan, 84,
89. Châteauneux,
290, 294.

32.
The terrace
cultivation
on the
mountains.

The earth required to be brought from a distance, retaining walls to be erected, the steep slopes converted into a series of gentle inclinations, the mountain-torrents diverted or restrained, and the means of artificial irrigation, to sustain nature during the long droughts of summer, obtained. By the incessant labour of centuries this prodigy has been completed, and the very stony sterility of nature converted into the means of heightening, by artificial means, the heat of summer. The quantity of rock with which the soil abounded, furnished at hand the materials of walls and terraces. These terraces are always covered with fruit-trees, and, amidst the reflection of so many walls, the fruit is most abundant, and superior of its kind. No room is lost in these little but precious freeholds: the vine extends its tendrils along the terrace-walls; a hedge, formed of the same vine-branches, surrounds each terrace, and covers it with verdure. In the corners formed by the meeting of the supporting-walls, a little sheltered

* "Omnia tunc florent: tunc est nova temporis ætas:

Et nova de gravido palmitæ gemma tumet:

Et modo formatis amicitur vitibus arbos:

Prodit et in summum seminis herba solum:

Et tepidum volucres concentibus aëra mulcent,

Ludit et in pratis luxuriatque pecus."—OVID.

nook is found, where fig-trees are planted, which ripen delicious fruit under their protection. The owner takes advantage of every vacant space to raise melons and vegetables. Olive-trees shelter it from the rains; so that within the compass of a very small garden he obtains olives, figs, grapes, pomegranates, and melons. Such is the return which nature yields under this admirable system of management, that half the crop of seven acres is sufficient in general for the maintenance of a family of five persons, being little more than the produce of three-fourths of an acre to each soul; and the whole produce supports them all in rustic affluence. Italy, in this delightful region, still realises the glowing description of her classic historian above three hundred years ago.^{1*}

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¹ Châteaueux, 299, 303. Personal observation. Sismondi, Agric. de Tosc. 89, 94. Young, ii. 152, 157.

Great part of the mountain-region of Italy has adopted this admirable cultivation; and this explains what, to a northern traveller, at first sight seems inexplicable—the vast population, which is found not merely in the valleys, but over the greater part of the ridges of the Apennines, and the endless succession of villages and hamlets which are perched on the edge or summits of rocks, often, to appearance, scarcely accessible to human approach. Much care, however, and the constant labour of the husbandman, are required to uphold the little freeholds thus formed out of natural sterility; for, if his attention is intermitted for any considerable time, the violence of the tempests destroys what it had cost so much labour to produce. Storms and torrents wash down the soil; the terraces are broken through; the heavy rains bring down a shapeless mass of ruins; everything returns rapidly to its former state; and of so much laboured construction there soon

33.
Constant effort requisite to prevent the terraces going to ruin.

* "Ridotta tutta in somma pace, e tranquillata collevata non meno ne luoghi peu montuosi, e peu sterli, che nelle pianure e regioni peu fertili, ne sotto posta ad altro imperio che de suoi medesimi, non solo ora abbondata d'abitati e di ricchezze, ma illustrata somma mente dalla magnificenza di molti principi, dallo splendore di molte nobilissime e bellissime citte, dalla sedia e maesta dalla religione."—GUICCIARDINI, lib. i.

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¹ Château-
vieux, 302,
303. Sism.
Agric. de
Tosc. 94,
100.

34.
Peculiar
character
which this
gives to
Italian
scenery.

remain only shapeless vestiges covered with briars. The sweet chestnuts, which grow luxuriantly in almost every part of the Apennines, contribute to uphold this dense population, by the subsistence which they afford in regions where the terrace-cultivation cannot be introduced; while at the summit of all, above this zone of wood, where the frequent clouds nourish a short but sweet herbage, mountain-pastures are to be found similar to the dry and healthful downs of the south of England.¹

Hence arises the romantic character of Italian scenery, the constant combination of a mountain outline, and all the wild features of an alpine country, with the rich vegetation of a southern climate—the intermixture of the wildest and most awful with the softest and most delicate features of nature. Hence, too, the rudeness, the pastoral simplicity, and the occasional predatory habits to be found in the population; for these rocky and crooked fastnesses render it almost impossible for any police, however vigilant, to track out robbers who are sheltered by their numerous inhabitants. The insalubrious air which still infects the plains, and the devastation which they formerly underwent from mutual warfare, or the plunder of the robber mountain-chivalry, have still farther contributed to fix industry and population in the mountains; for the malaria does not rise above a certain level, generally as clearly defined as the surface of a lake, on the hills, and the feudal horsemen paused at the entrance of these mountain-asylums of industry. The effects of these causes are still conspicuous. To this day, you may travel for miles together in the plains and valleys, without meeting with a single town or village, or even a human habitation; while the towns cluster on the hill-sides, the houses nestling together on some scanty ledge, with cliffs rising above them, and sinking down abruptly below them, the very *congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis* of Virgil's description, which he even then called "antique walls." They had been the

strongholds of the primeval inhabitants of the country, and are still inhabited after the lapse of so many centuries—nothing of the stir and movement of other parts of Europe having penetrated these lonely valleys, and tempted the people to quit their mountain fastnesses for the more accessible dwellings in the plain. ¹

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¹ Arnold's
Lectures,
166.

The third region comprises the plains which lie between the western declivity of the Apennines and the Mediterranean. This district comprehends the Marshes of Volterra, still as pestilential as when they proved all but fatal to Hannibal's army: the plain of the Clitumnus, rich as in ancient days in herds and flocks; the Campagna of Rome, once inhabited by numerous tribes, now an almost uninhabited desert; the Pontine Marshes, formerly the abode of thirty nations, now a pestilential swamp; the plain of Pæstum, at one time inhabited by the luxurious Sybarites, now known only by its stately ruins and deserted thickets; the Campagna of Naples, still the scene of industry, elegance, and agricultural riches. The character of these plains is so different from that of the other great divisions of Italy, that it is hardly possible to believe that they belong to the same quarter of the globe. In the Campagna of Naples indeed, still, as in ancient times, an admirable cultivation brings to perfection the choicest gifts of nature. Magnificent crops of wheat and maize cover the rich and level expanse; rows of elms or willows shelter their harvests from the too scorching rays of the sun; and luxuriant vines, clustering to the very tops of the trees, are trained in festoons from one summit to the other. On its hills the orange, the vine, and the fig-tree flourish in luxuriant beauty; the air is rendered fragrant by their ceaseless perfume; and the prodigy is here exhibited of the fruit and the flower appearing at the same time on the same stem.* The banks of the

35.
Third
region.
The plains
between the
mountains
and the sea.

* "L'aura che rende gli alberi fioriti.
Co' fiori eterni eterno il frutto dura;
E mentra spunta l'un, l'altro matura.
Nel tronco istesso, e tra l'istessa foglia,

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Clitumnus, too, in Tuscany, still in some places maintain their ancient character of being "rich in men and the fatness of the soil."* But, with these exceptions, those plains are covered only with grass, and exhibit the usual features of the pastoral character. After leaving the centres of elegance and refinement in Florence and Rome, the traveller is astonished to find himself in the midst of uninclosed and desolate plains, over which numerous herds of cattle wander at large, under the care of shepherds mounted on horseback, and armed with lances, after the fashion of the steppes of Tartary. Every thing in those immense pasture-lands is at variance alike with the rich fields of Lombardy and the peopled heights of the Apennines. The farms are of great size, and entirely composed of pasture; the inhabitants are few and unhealthy; hardly any villages or hamlets are to be met with. The towns, too, are far distant and declining; and were it not for the indications of a dense population, which still exist in the ruins scattered at intervals over its surface, one would be led to believe they had never been tenanted by any other inhabitants but the wild-boar and the buffalo.¹

¹ Personal observation.

36.
Unparalleled interest of Rome.

The cities of Italy have been celebrated since the very infancy of civilisation, from the marvellous celebrity in arts and arms which their inhabitants have attained; but they are not so considerable in point of population as might have been expected from their long-established fame. Alone, of the countries in the world, Italy has *twice* risen to the highest eminence in the achievements both of war and peace. On the ruins of the

Sovra il nascente fico invecchia il fico.
Pendono a un ramo, un con dorata spoglia;
L'altro con verde, il novo e'l pomo antico.
Lussureggiante serpe alto e germoglia
La torta vite, ov' è più l'orto aprico:
Qui l'uva ha in fiori acerba, e qui d'or l'ave
E di pipropo, e già di nettar grave."

Gerusalemme Liberata, xvi. 10, 11.

* "Dives viris atque ubere glebæ."

Capitol, the former mistress of the world, a new empire arose, founded not on arms, but on religious reverence, which at one period embraced a wider dominion than had ever been conquered by the arms of the consuls. Rome in consequence possesses an interest, and exhibits a magnificence, which no other city in the world can boast; for it contains the remains of genius, and the monuments of art, alike of ancient and modern times; and is peopled with the shades at once of Cicero and Virgil, of Tasso and Alfieri, of Raphael and Michael Angelo. The amphitheatre of Titus still remains in ruined grandeur beside the Obelisk of Thebes, but it looks down on St John-Lateran, from whence so many laws have issued to the Christian world; the horses of Praxiteles yet adorn the Eternal City, but they front the Palace of the Quirinal, the abode of the Supreme Pontiff; the ancient pavement of the Sacred Way, furrowed by the wheels of a hundred triumphs, again, after a burial of fourteen hundred years, is exposed to the light of the sun, but it leads only to the modern Capitol, where "bare-footed friars sing vespers in the remains of the Temple of Jupiter." The columns of Trajan and Antonine still surmount the ancient plain of the Campus Martius, but they adjoin the crowded and brilliant scene of the modern Corso; the Tomb of Adrian has been bespoiled, but it was so to adorn the "fane of the Vatican—the Dome of St Peter's, the noblest monument which the hands of man have ever raised to the purpose of religion."¹ Before a second Rome appears in the world, a second Republic must have been followed by a second Empire; a second Mythology by a second Popedom; a second Forum by a second St Peter's; and the genius of Modern Europe, drawn to a centre by one conquering State, must have been succeeded by another night of a thousand years, during which superstition has subjected the whole civilised world to its sway.

¹ Gibbon.

During the days of its greatness, Rome is said to have

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37.
Population
of Italy, and
its chief
towns.

contained three millions of inhabitants; but it may be doubted whether it in reality ever was inhabited by so numerous a population as modern London.* It is ascertained, by an authentic enumeration, that at the capture of the city by Alaric, it contained 1,200,000 inhabitants. Its present population is only 172,000; and in the time of Napoleon's government, it had sunk to 120,000. Venice, Milan, Florence, and Genoa, so celebrated in history, poetry, and romance, are less considerable in point of wealth and population than second-rate manufacturing towns of Great Britain; and the only really large city of Italy, Naples, will apparently soon be outstripped in numbers by Glasgow, a provincial town of Scotland.† The industry and population of the great towns of Italy have sensibly declined during the last three centuries, in consequence of the alteration in the channels of commerce, the result of the rise of Great Britain, and the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. Florence, which formerly contained 150,000 souls, can now boast of little more than half the number; Venice and Genoa have scarce a third of their former inhabitants. But the industry of the country is undecayed. Commercial wealth, deprived of its former channels of investment, has generally turned to rural enterprise,—the towns

* By the census of 1841, London contained 1,864,000 souls, the greatest aggregate of human beings in a single city of which the history of the world has preserved an authentic record. The number now (1848) is probably at least 2,200,000. Glasgow, next to it in point of numbers in the British empire, contained 274,000, and now (1848) is peopled by 350,000 souls.

† The following is the populations of the principal cities of Italy, according to the latest statistical accounts, (1836):—

Inhabitants.		Inhabitants.		Inhabitants.	
Milan, . .	150,000	Rome, . .	139,000	Bologna, . .	71,000
Venice, . .	110,000	Palermo, .	168,000	Ferrara, . .	24,000
Verona, . .	60,000	Vicenza, . .	30,000	Ravenna, . .	24,000
Padua, . .	47,000	Bergamo, .	30,500	Ancona, . .	30,000
Turin, . .	117,000	Parma, . .	30,000	Messina, . .	40,000
Genoa, . .	100,000	Modena, . .	28,000	Catania, . .	47,000
Leghorn, .	75,000	Florence, .	78,000	Taranto, . .	14,000
Alessandria,	35,000	Pisa, . . .	20,000	Reggio, . .	17,000
Perrugio, .	30,000	Coni, . . .	18,000	Foggio, . .	21,000 ¹
Naples, . .	364,000	Adi, . . .	22,000		

¹ Malte-
Brun, vii.
283, 309, 359,
403, 480.

have declined, but the provinces have increased both in riches and inhabitants; and the population of Italy was never, either in the days of the emperors or of the mediæval republics, so considerable as it is at the present time. It amounts at this time (1832) to nineteen millions of souls, and exceeded sixteen millions in the days of Napoleon; a population which gave 1237 to the square marine league, a density greater than that of either France or England at that period.^{1*}

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¹ Gibbon's
Rome, iv.
91, c. 31.
Malte-
Brun, vii.
283, 490.

* The following table exhibits the population of the Italian States in 1810 under Napoleon, and in 1832, with the square leagues of territory, and density of the population to the square league:

	Square Marine Leagues.	Population in 1810.	Population in 1832.	Pop. per Squ. League in 1832.
I. Naples contained,	4,100	4,963,000	5,810,000	1,414
Sicily and Lesser Isles,	1,360	1,635,000	1,682,000	1,236
Total of Naples,	5,460	2,598,000	7,492,000	1,372
II. Kingdom of Sardinia—				
Piedmont and Savoy,	2,050	3,470,000	3,434,000	1,675
Sardinia,	1,600	520,000	490,087	306
Total of Sardinia, &c.	3,650	3,990,000	3,924,087	1,174
III. Kingdom of Lombardy and Venice—				
Province of Milan,	1,042	2,082,000	2,416,000	2,424
of Venice,	1,127	1,982,000	2,041,000	2,017
Total of Lombardy and Venice,	2,169	4,064,000	4,457,000	2,210
IV. Ecclesiastical States,	2,230	2,346,000	2,850,000	1,266
V. Tuscany and Elba,	1,098	1,180,000	1,282,000	1,167
VI. Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla,	228	377,000	433,000	1,538
VII. Modena,	272	332,000	385,000	1,415
VIII. Lucca, Carrara, and Massa,	54	138,000	144,500	2,675
IX. Republic of St Marino,	5	7,000	9,000	1,700

SUMMARY.

	1810.	1832.
Naples in Italy,	4,963,000	5,810,000
Piedmont, without Savoy and Sardinia,	3,020,000	3,016,000
Lombardy and Venice,	4,064,000	4,457,000
Ecclesiastical States,	2,346,000	2,850,000
Tuscany and Elba,	1,180,000	1,282,000
Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla,	377,000	443,000
Modena,	332,000	385,000
Lucca, Carrara, and Massa,	138,000	144,500
St Marino,	7,000	9,000

¹ Malte-
Brun, vii.
237, 487.
and Stat.
d'Italie, 1810.

Italy Proper, 16,407,000 18,390,500¹

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38.

Cause of
this vast
population
in Italy.

The causes of the extraordinary population, which has thus survived the political decline of modern Italy, and the decay of the principal seats of its manufacturing industry, is to be found in the direction of its capital to agricultural investment, and the increasing industry by which, during a long course of centuries, its inhabitants have overcome the sterility of nature. The admirable cultivation which has crept up the mountain-sides furnishes food for a numerous population at the height of several thousand feet above the sea, and explains the singular fact, at first sight so inexplicable to a northern observer, that in scenes where, at a distance, nothing but continued foliage meets the eye, the traveller finds, on a nearer approach, villages and hamlets, and all the signs of a numerous peasantry. The terrace-gardening of the hills in Tuscany, the irrigations in the valley of the Arno, are extraordinary monuments of human industry. Means have been taken to avert or regulate the devastating torrents which descend, charged with autumnal rains, from the mountains, and to diffuse them in an infinity of little canals over the whole face, whether broken or level, of the country. The chestnut forests, which grow spontaneously in the higher regions, furnish subsistence for a large part of the peasantry ; while, on the summit of all, the cool pastures of the Apennines, from whence the shepherd can see from sea to sea, feed vast herds of cattle ; and flocks of sheep and goats find there a delicious pasture, when driven, during the summer months, from the great pasture-farms of the Maremma, then brown, parched, and intersected by cracks from the long-continued drought. Thus every part of the country is made to contribute to the use of man ; and Italy exhibits the extraordinary spectacle, interesting alike to the philanthropist and the economical observer, of a country in which population and civilisation have withstood the successive decline of *two* periods of political greatness ; and the human race has found the means of happiness and increase amidst

the destruction of all the sources of commercial prosperity, in the steady application of wealth and industry to the cultivation of the soil. It is a spectacle on which the eye of an inhabitant of our islands may well rest with complacency ; for it affords, perhaps, the only solid ground for hope and confidence in contemplating the future fate of the people of this empire, now resting, in a great degree, on the splendid, but insecure and shifting, foundation of commercial greatness.¹

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¹ Château-
vieux, 80,
58, 157.
Young's
Travels, ii.
152, 157.
Sismondi's
Agric. de la
Toscane,
102, 156.

Land in the Apennines is very much subdivided : in Tuscany alone there are eighty-seven thousand owners of little freeholds producing below £5 sterling a-year, and thirty-one thousand between that and £25.* It is in the unremitting industry and constant toil, generated by the attachments which this general diffusion of property produces, that one great cause of the extraordinary population and general wellbeing of the people in the mountain regions is to be found. It has not been the result, as in Republican France, of the violent spoliation of the clergy and the higher orders, nor of the boundless expansion of civilised man through the unappropriated recesses of the forest, as in North America. It has been the simple effect of industry steadily pursued, and frugality unceasingly practised, in a country not revolutionised, and wholly appropriated during a long series of centuries. And what has been the consequence ? Why, that Tuscany now exhibits the marvellous, and, to an economical observer, highly interesting combination of ancient civilisation with social felicity, of density of population with general wellbeing, of declining commercial prosperity with increasing agricultural opulence. The high wages of manufacturing industry have not there been wasted in intoxication or devoted to extravagance : they were invested, during the days of prosperity, in numerous little freeholds, which at once elevated the character and improved the tastes of their possessors, and have communicated the same

39.

Great divi-
sion of land
in the Ap-
ennines,
and its ad-
mirable
effects.

* Cadastre of 1828, given in Raumer's Italy, ii. 28.

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1796.

¹. Châteauneux, 80,
97. Young's
Travels, ii.
152, 157.
Sism. Agric.
de la Tosc.
102. Ran-
mer's Italy,
ii, 28.
Cadastre,
1832. Per-
sonal obser-
vation.

40.
Political
weakness of
Italy.

habits to their descendants ; and, in consequence, Tus-
cany has surmounted equally the ruin of its commercial
establishments and the fall of its political independence ;
and population, duly regulated by the elevated standard
of comfort among the poor, exhibits the features of general
wellbeing in the latest stages of national existence—an-
other proof, among the many which history affords, of the
eternal truth, that the real source of national, equally as
of individual, felicity is to be found in the habits of the
people ; and that no misfortunes, how great soever, are
irremediable, except such as undermine their virtue.¹

In a political point of view, however, the importance
of Italy is at an end ; and the garden of Europe seems
destined to no other fate, during the remainder of European
story, but that of being the prize of the most valiant and
powerful of the transalpine nations. Still its inhabitants
are doomed to utter the mournful lamentation—

“ Vincitrice o vinta, sempre asserva.”*

The cause of this is twofold. Italy, though overrun suc-
cessively by the Goths and the Lombards, never was the
resting-place of so considerable a portion of the northern
nations, as to acquire the magnitude and consistence of
modern empires. It was broken into small separate states,
and, when civilisation revived, in the eleventh and twelfth
centuries, it was on the model, and according to the ideas
of antiquity, that industry and population were distribut-
ed. The Forum, equally as in Athens, Corinth, or Rome,
was the centre alike of power and of deliberation in the
modern Italian republics : the subject territory was asso-
ciated in none of the duties of government. Monarchy
had not given its states the unity and vigour of undivided
administration. Its civilisation was that of the city, not
of the tribe. No representative system united its inha-
bitants with the dominant borough : the rule of a few
thousand citizens was felt to be insupportable by the rural

* “ Conquering or conquered, ever enslaved.”

inhabitants, because the self-interest of the oligarchy regulated all their proceedings, and central power had given the mass of the people none of its protection. Hence the territory of the Italian republics was limited to the district which a single city could govern : and a country thus subdivided was wholly unable to withstand the shock of the great transalpine monarchies, to whom the feudal institutions had given unity and vigour, and who had inherited from their Gothic ancestors the spirit of conquest.

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The second cause which has paralysed Italy, in a political point of view, in recent times, has been the loss, speaking generally, of the military spirit by its inhabitants. That its charming climate is capable of bringing to maturity a race of heroes and patriots, as well as one of poets and artists, need be told to none who are acquainted with the glorious story of Rome in ancient, and the not less heart-stirring annals of the Italian republics in modern times. But the history of Italy for the last three hundred years, and since the independence of the lesser states has been merged in the ascendant of the transalpine monarchies, has completely demonstrated that the warlike virtues are no longer in estimation, and that the arts and enjoyments of peace have entirely disqualified them for the generous sacrifices, the heroic self-denial, which are necessary either to attain national independence or to support military courage. When led by French officers, and placed beside French regiments, the inhabitants of Lombardy, during the wars of Napoleon, attained a high and deserved reputation ; but so did the Portuguese and Hindoos under British direction, in the campaigns of the Peninsula and India. The peasantry of every country, even the most effeminate, will fight well if gallantly led : it is in the impossibility of finding such gallant leaders among their own higher classes, that the never-failing mark of national decline is to be found. Often individually courageous, the Italians, in a national point of view, have been for centuries totally destitute of the

41.
Loss of
military
spirit by
the people.

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1796.

military virtues ; they have never, since the defeat of the invasion of Charles VIII., in the close of the fifteenth century, been able to stand before the shock of the French or German bayonets. Experience has not yet enabled us to determine whether this decline from the heroic courage of ancient times is to be ascribed to the enervating effects of a delicious climate, or the general selfishness produced by a long period of pacific enjoyment. But the future history of Great Britain will solve the problem, for its winters are not likely to be ever less rigorous than they were in the days of Nelson and Wellington ; and if its inhabitants lose their courage, it can be ascribed to no other cause but the corrupting influence of commercial greatness.

42.
Present
character of
the people.

The character of the Italians at this time is so different from what it was in the days of the ancient Romans, that it is hardly possible to believe they belong to the same country. Unlike their sturdy and heroic progenitors, they are almost entirely absorbed in the arts and elegancies of life. And while their political consideration and military reputation have become extinct, they are now distinguished chiefly, if not entirely, by their extraordinary genius in the fine arts ; and the universal spread of a refined taste for works of imagination, and an enthusiastic perception of their charms, to an extent, among the middle and labouring classes, wholly unknown among the transalpine states. Reversing the maxims by which the ancient republic rose to greatness, they have devoted themselves to the formation of the living canvass, the breathing brass, and left to others the care of conquering the world.* In this respect, they bear a much closer resemblance to the inhabitants of Greece than those of Rome in former times. Passionately attached to the

* " *Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra,
Credo equidem ; vivos ducent de marmore vultus :
Orabunt causas melius ; cœlique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent :
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento ;
Hæ tibi erunt artes—pâcisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*"—*Æneid*, vi. 850.

elegancies of life, lively and ingenious in conversation, endowed with an ardent imagination and a refined taste, they have risen, like the ancient Athenians, to the very highest eminence in the fine arts, and, like the Greeks of old, continue in these respects to give law to their conquerors, long after they have sunk before the ascendant of energy and courage among ruder nations.

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1796.

At the period of the French invasion of Italy in 1796, the total forces of the Italian states amounted to one hundred and sixty thousand men under arms, which could with ease have been raised, from a population of sixteen millions, to three hundred thousand. But, with the exception of the Piedmontese troops, this military array was of no real use ; except when led on by French officers, the soldiers of the other Italian states were almost valueless, at least amidst the shock of the transalpine nations. Bitterly did Italy suffer for this decay in her national spirit, and extinction of her military courage. With the French invasion commenced a long period of suffering : tyranny, under the name of liberty ; rapine, under that of generosity ; excitement among the poor, spoliation of the rich ; clamour in public against the nobility, and adulation of them in private ; use made of the lovers of freedom by those who despised them ; and revolt against tyranny by those who aimed only at being tyrants ; general praise of liberty in words, and universal extinction of it in action ; the stripping of churches ; the robbery of hospitals ; the levelling of the palaces of the great, the destruction of the cottages of the poor ;—all that military license has of most terrible, all that despotic authority has of most oppressive. Then did her people feel that neither riches of soil nor glories of recollection—neither a southern sun nor the perfection of art, can save a nation from destruction, if it has lost the vigour to uphold or the courage to defend them.¹

48.
Calamities
which the
French
invasion
brought on
Italy.

¹ Bot. i. 298.
Th. viii. 220.
Nap. iii. 29,
130.

Although the plains of Piedmont and Lombardy, where the war was to be carried on, present few positions which,

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1796.

44.
Description
of the plain
of Lom-
bardy in a
military
point of
view.

from the inequality of the ground, are capable of defence, yet it was in some places one of the most defensible countries in Europe. Its great rivers and numerous fortified towns were the cause of this peculiarity. At its western end, the principal passes leading over the Alps into France were closed by mountain forts, the strength of which had been amply proved by the French during the war of the Succession; and if these were surmounted, and the plain of Piedmont were reached, a strong chain of fortresses was prepared to arrest the steps of the invader. Coni, Turin, Alessandria, Tortona, Voghera, Genoa, Gavi, and Ivrea, formed so many bulwarks, the possession of which was essential to a firm footing on the Italian plains, and which it was yet difficult to besiege, from the obstacles to regular operations, arising from the British having the undisputed command at sea, and the extreme difficulty of transporting heavy battering-trains over the rugged and inhospitable summits of the Alps. But if these fortresses were ever reduced, or won by treaty, they would form the best possible base for offensive operations, which would render it probably impossible to stop the invader's progress till he reached the banks of the Adige.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
120, 131.
Personal
observation.

45.
Its rivers
as a source
of defence.

There, however, most serious obstacles awaited an invading army. The great defence against the passage of a hostile force over the plain of Lombardy is to be found in the number, depth, and rapidity of the Alpine rivers, which, descending from the glaciers of Switzerland, fall generally at right angles into the Po, near the centre of the level expanse. Not only are these rivers at all times deep and rapid, but they have this peculiarity, arising from the melting of the snows during the warm season in the higher Alps, that they flow with the most impetuous torrents in the height of summer, the season in other respects most favourable for military operations. The art of man has improved upon these great natural barriers, and strong fortified towns protect the principal

and often the only bridges over their otherwise impassable floods. The Adige, in particular, presented an uncommonly strong line of defence in these respects ; its deep and ample stream, from the foot of the Alpine cliffs behind Verona, to its junction with the Po, was strongly fortified at every point where a passage could be attempted ; and the line of fortresses which guarded its bridges, Verona, Legnago, and Peschiera, could only be reduced by operations in form, and by the aid of heavy artillery. Mantua, protected by its strong bastions and surrounding lakes, would itself require an army for its reduction : the rugged banks and swollen streams of the Mincio, the Piave, the Tagliamento, the Brenta, formed so many strong positions to which the defending army could retire ; while the broad channel of the Po secured one flank from being turned, and the vast natural fortress of the Tyrol, on the other, presented a sure refuge in case of disaster. It already might have been anticipated, what experience in the sequel amply demonstrated, that it was amidst the intricacies of these rivers, fortresses, and mountains, that the great contest for the empire of Italy would take place.¹

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¹ Napoleon, iii. 142, 146. Personal observation.

When Napoleon assumed the command of the Republican army in the end of March, he found every thing in the most miserable state. The efficient force under arms, and ready for offensive operations, amounted only to forty-two thousand men ; but it was continually reinforced by troops from the depots in the interior, after his successes commenced ; so that, notwithstanding the losses of the campaign, it was maintained throughout nearly at that amount. The guns did not exceed sixty pieces, and the cavalry was almost dismounted ; but the garrisons in the rear, amounting to eight thousand men, could furnish supplies, when the war was removed from the frontier, and the arsenals of Nice and Antibes were well provided with artillery. For a very long period the soldiers of all ranks had suffered the extremity of want. Perched on

46.
State of the French army when Napoleon took the command. March 27.

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the inhospitable summits of the Apennines during the whole of the dreadful winter of 1795-6, they had enjoyed neither tents nor shelter; magazines they had none; their shoes were worn out, their clothing was in rags. The troops had, during nearly the whole winter, been placed on half a ration a-day, and even this scanty supply was for the most part procured by marauding expeditions of the soldiers into the neighbouring valleys. The officers, from the effect of the depreciation of paper, had for a long time in reality received only eight francs a month of pay; and the staff was entirely on foot. On one occasion the Directory had awarded a gratuity of three louis-d'or to each general of division; and the future marshals and princes of the Empire subsisted for long on the humble present. But, considered with reference to their skill and warlike qualities, the army presented a very different aspect, and was, beyond all question, the most efficient one which the Republic possessed. Composed, for the most part, of young soldiers, whom the great levies of 1793 had brought into the field, they had been inured to hardship and privations during the subsequent campaigns in the Pyrenees and Maritime Alps—a species of warfare which, by leading detached parties continually into difficult and perilous situations, is singularly calculated to strengthen the frame and augment the intelligence of the soldier. Its spirit had been greatly elevated by the successful result of the battle of Loano; and its chiefs, Massena, Augereau, Serrurier, and Berthier, had already become distinguished, and, like stars in the firmament on the approach of twilight, began to give token of their future light.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
135, 136,
151. Jom.
viii. 57, 59.
Hard. iii.
306. Th.
viii. 220,
221.

47.
Character of
its officers.
Berthier:
his early
history.

Berthier was chief of the staff—a situation which he continued to hold in all the campaigns of Napoleon, down to the battle of Waterloo. His father had, among other appointments, been chief engineer of the armies under Louis XV., and colonel of the corps of geographical engineers; so that he had enjoyed the

advantages of respectable birth and a military education. He was born at Versailles on the 28th November 1753, and was at this period forty-three years of age. He had entered the army at the age of seventeen, and, in 1778, had served with such distinction under Rochambeau in America, that, before the end of that war, he had risen to the rank of colonel—a very unusual thing in those days for an officer who did not possess the advantages of patrician birth. In 1789 he was appointed major-general of the national guard at Versailles, in which character he rendered the Royal family some service during the stormy days of the 5th and 6th October. His disposition, however, decidedly marked him as for the popular side; and, in 1790, he presented a petition to the National Assembly, praying for the erection of a monument to the soldiers killed during the democratic revolt of Nancy. On the 17th February 1791, he behaved with equal coolness and conduct, on occasion of the furious mob which attempted to break into and pillage the château of Bellevue, the residence of the princesses, aunts of Louis XVI. His good conduct on this occasion gave great umbrage to the Jacobin party, and he was glad to secure his safety by accepting the situation of adjutant-general of the army of old Marshal Luckner. Dumourier, however, who had a command in it, early perceived what his subsequent history too clearly evinced, that his capacity was not equal to the general direction of affairs, and he wrote to the Directory that he was ruining the old marshal. He was in consequence removed early in 1792 to la Vendée, where he acted in a subordinate situation with distinction; and at the battle of Saumur, in 1793, he had three horses shot under him. He was afterwards chief of the staff to Custine, and it was with no small difficulty, and only by consummate prudence, that he avoided the fate of his unfortunate general.¹ Immediately after the 9th Thermidor, he was sent by the government as chief of the staff

¹ Biog.
Univ. sup.
lviii. 103,
104.

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to Kellermann, in the army of the Alps ; and it was in that capacity he was found by Napoleon, when he took the command of that army, in April 1796.

48.
His charac-
ter.

Active, indefatigable alike on horseback and in the cabinet, he was admirably qualified to discharge the duties of that important situation, without being possessed of the originality and decision requisite for a commander-in-chief. Perfectly master of the geography of every country which the army was to enter, understanding thoroughly the use of maps, he was able to calculate with admirable precision the time requisite for the different corps to arrive at the ground assigned to them, as well as to direct in a lucid manner the course they were to pursue. He was precision itself in his habits ; and, above all, possessed of such an extraordinary faculty of enduring fatigue, that he was never, on any occasion, whatever labour he had previously undergone, unable to resume the duties either of the field or the cabinet. Faithful and trustworthy, he obeyed his instructions with docility, readiness, and perfect silence. A secret divulged to Berthier was as safe as if its possessor was in his grave ; and these qualities made him an invaluable assistant to Napoleon. But he had no genius in his character ; he was incapable alike of great conceptions and generous feelings ; an admirable second in command, he was wholly unfit to be general-in-chief.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
185. Biog.
Univ. (Ber-
thier.) lviii.
104, 105.

49.
Early
history of
Massena.

Massena, a native of Nice, was born on the 6th May 1758, of respectable parents in the mercantile line ; but, having lost his father early in life, he never received an education suitable to the elevated duties to which he was afterwards called in life. One of his relations, a captain of a trading vessel, out of humanity took the young orphan on board his ship, and he made several voyages with him ; but having conceived a dislike for a sea life, he entered the army as a private soldier in the year 1775, in the regiment Royal-Italien, in which one of his uncles was captain. Ere long he was made a corporal ; and,

after he had become a marshal of France, he said that that step was the one in his whole career which had cost him most trouble to gain, and which had given him most satisfaction when acquired. His intelligence and good conduct soon promoted him to the rank of sergeant and adjutant; but in those days of aristocratic exclusion, he could not rise higher,—the epaulets of a sub-lieutenant being rarely conferred except on those of noble birth. After having served fourteen years, he became weary of a life of inactivity, and retired in 1789 to his native city, where he made an advantageous marriage; but no sooner did the Revolution break out, and the military career become open to all ranks, than he resumed his old profession, and was soon raised by the suffrages of his soldiers to the rank of adjutant-major of the battalion of the Var, and subsequently to that of colonel of the same regiment. His great military abilities subsequently insured him rapid promotion. He was made general of brigade in August 1793, and general of division in December of the same year; and it was mainly owing to his able movements that the great victory was gained in the defile of Saorgio in August 1794, and on the Col de San Giacomo, in September 1795. In fact, he had acquired, by the force of his talents, the chief direction of the army of Italy during these two campaigns; and it was by the effect chiefly of his councils that their brilliant successes had been obtained.¹

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¹ Biog. des
Cont. xv.
67, 68,
(Massena.)

Gifted by nature with a robust frame and an undaunted spirit, indefatigable in exertion, unconquerable in resolution, he was to be seen night and day on horseback, among the rocks and the mountains. Decided, brave, and intrepid, full of ambition, his leading characteristic was obstinacy; a quality which, according as it is rightly or wrongly directed, leads to the greatest successes or the most ruinous disasters. His conversation gave few indications of genius; but at the first cannon-shot his mental energy redoubled, and, when surrounded by danger, his

50.
His charac-
ter.

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XX.

1796.

thoughts were clear and his spirit undaunted. In the midst of the dying and the dead, of balls sweeping away those who encircled him, Massena was himself, and gave his orders with the greatest coolness and precision. Even after defeat, he recommenced the struggle as if he had come off victorious; and by these means saved the Republic at the battle of Zurich. But these great qualities were disfigured by as remarkable vices. He retained throughout, in the noble profession of arms, the love of gain which he had inherited from the mercantile pursuits of his father. He was rapacious, sordid, and avaricious; mean in character, selfish in disposition, he shared the profits of the contractors and commissaries, and never could keep himself clear from acts of speculation.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
187.
O'Meara, i.
239.

51.
Early his-
tory of
Augereau.

Augereau, born in the faubourg St-Marceau, on the 11th November 1757, was the son of a common mason. In infancy he gave no small disquiet to his parents by his quarrelsome and fractious disposition, insomuch that they were glad to get quit of him by enlisting him as a private dragoon in the regiment of Burgundy. He was soon, however, dismissed the corps for a serious offence, and returned to Paris penniless and in disgrace. Here his lofty stature and military air again attracted the attention of the recruiting sergeants, and he was enrolled in the regiment of carabineers, commanded by the Marquis Poyanna. There, however, his mischievous disposition a second time broke out, and he was expelled from his new corps for carrying off his captain's horses to sell them in Switzerland. Again thrown loose on the world, he became a fencing-master in the little town of Lodi; and, having soon tired of its monotonous life, he made his way to Naples, where he entered the Royal Guard, and, by his skill in the use of arms, was soon made a sergeant. After serving there for some years, he resumed his profession of fencing-master, which he followed for a considerable time in that capital with success. The breaking out of the Revolution in France, however, soon attracted him to

the great centre of plunder and advancement ; he returned in December 1792 to Paris, and immediately enlisted in a regiment of volunteers which was then raising, and which soon afterwards marched to la Vendée. There his activity, skill, and courage speedily became so conspicuous, that he was chosen by the men as their colonel. The distinction thus acquired procured for him the situation of adjutant-general of the army of the Pyrenees, where he signalised himself in several actions under Dugommier, particularly on occasion of the recapture of Bellegarde in 1794, and the actions on the Fluvia in the spring following. After the termination of the Spanish war, he was transferred, with a division of twelve thousand strong, to the Army of Italy ; and, at the outset of his career there, bore a prominent part in the decisive battle of Loano, which opened to Napoleon — who soon after assumed the command—the gates of Italy.¹

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¹ Biog.
Univ. sup.
lvi. 547,
548. (Augereau.)

With little education, hardly any knowledge, no grasp of mind, he was yet beloved by the soldiers, from the order and discipline which he always enforced. Sprung from the ranks, he knew how to excite and rule the men with whom he had formerly served. He was severe and unrelenting in discipline, stern in enforcing obedience to his commands, but willing to allow his soldiers, if they proved obedient to them, every species of license at the expense of the inhabitants of the conquered territory. His attacks were conducted with courage and regularity, and he led his columns with invincible resolution during the fire ; but he had not the moral firmness requisite for lasting success, and was frequently thrown into unreasonable dejection shortly after his greatest triumphs. He had nothing chivalrous or elevated in his character ; his manners were coarse, his ideas often savage, and he had no other idea of governing men but the brute force against which, in youth, he had so much revolted, and to which in age he was so much inclined. His political opinions led him to sympathise with the extreme republicans ; but

52.
His character.

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XX.

1796.

Nap. iii.
3.

no man was less fitted by nature either to understand, or shine in, the civil contests in which he was always so desirous to engage; and, like many others of that party, he showed himself at last equally ungrateful to his benefactor, and despicable by his conduct in adversity.¹

53.
Serrurier.

Serrurier, born in the department of the Aisne, was a major at the commencement of the Revolution, and incurred many dangers, in its early wars, from the suspicion under which he laboured of a secret leaning to the aristocracy. He was born at Laon in 1742, so that he was past fifty when the revolutionary war broke out. Rapidly raised to eminence, as all the officers of that period were, by the election of the soldiers, in the army of the Alps he distinguished himself, as general of division commanding the French right wing, in the capture of the Col de Fermo, in July 1795, and at the battle of Final, on the 11th December in the same year. No man was a better soldier, but he had not the qualities requisite for a general in separate command; and accordingly, after the first campaign of 1796, he was never intrusted by Napoleon with the direction of any considerable operations. He was brave in person, firm in conduct, and severe in discipline; but, though he gained the battle of Mondovi, and took Mantua, he was not in general fortunate in his operations, and became a marshal of France with less military glory than any of his other illustrious compeers.²

¹ Biog. des
Cont. xix.
159. Nap.
iii. 190.

54.
State of the
Allied
forces.

² Th. viii.
223. Jom.
viii. 57.
Nap. iii.
134, 136.
Hard. iii.
304, 305.

The Allies, on their side, had above fifty thousand men, and two hundred pieces of cannon; while the Sardinian army, of twenty-four thousand, guarded the avenues of Dauphiné and Savoy, and was opposed to the army of Kellermann, of nearly equal strength. Their forces were thus distributed: Beaulieu, a veteran of seventy-five, with thirty thousand combatants, entirely Austrians, and one hundred and forty pieces of cannon, was on the extreme right of the French, and in communication with the English fleet;³ while Colli, with twenty

thousand men, and sixty pieces, was in a line with him to the north, and covered Ceva and Coni. Generally speaking, the French occupied the crest of the mountains, while the Allies were stationed in the valleys leading to the eastward, into the Italian plains.

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Napoleon arrived at Nice on the 27th March, and soon gave indications of the great designs which he was meditating, by the following striking proclamation to his troops: — "Soldiers! you are almost naked, half-starved: the government owes you much, and can give you nothing. Your patience, your courage, in the midst of these rocks, have been admirable, but they reflect no splendour on your arms. I am about to conduct you into the most fertile plains of the earth. Rich provinces, opulent cities, will soon be in your power: there you will find abundant harvests, honour and glory. Soldiers of Italy, will you fail in courage?" "Famine, cold, and misery," said the young general, "these are the school of good soldiers."* His plan was to penetrate into Piedmont by the Col de Cadibone, the lowest part of the ridge which divides France from Italy, and separate the Austrian from the Piedmontese army, by pressing with the weight of his forces on the weak cordon which united them. For this purpose, it was necessary that the bulk of the troops should assemble on the extreme right — a delicate and perilous operation in presence of a superior enemy, but which was rendered comparatively safe by the snow which encumbered the lofty ridges that separated the two armies. Early in April, the whole French columns were in motion towards Genoa, while the French minister demanded from the senate of that city permission to pass the Bochetta, and the keys of Gavi — that being the chief route from the coasts to the interior of Piedmont. At the same time Beaulieu, in obedience to

55.
Napoleon's
first procla-
mation to
his soldiers,
and plan of
the cam-
paign.

* "La faim, le froid, et la misère, voilà l'école des bons soldats." Our young guardsmen and dragoon officers will scarcely admit this assertion, but the Lacedæmonians thought the same: — "Labor in venatu, cursus ab Eurotâ, fames, frigus, sitis, his rebus Lacedæmoniorum epulæ conduntur."

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1796.

¹ Nap. iii.
168.

53.
Serrurier.

no man was less fitted by nature either to understand, or shine in, the civil contests in which he was always so desirous to engage; and, like many others of that party, he showed himself at last equally ungrateful to his benefactor, and despicable by his conduct in adversity.¹

Serrurier, born in the department of the Aisne, was a major at the commencement of the Revolution, and incurred many dangers, in its early wars, from the suspicion under which he laboured of a secret leaning to the aristocracy. He was born at Laon in 1742, so that he was past fifty when the revolutionary war broke out. Rapidly raised to eminence, as all the officers of that period were, by the election of the soldiers, in the army of the Alps he distinguished himself, as general of division commanding the French right wing, in the capture of the Col de Fermo, in July 1795, and at the battle of Final, on the 11th December in the same year. No man was a better soldier, but he had not the qualities requisite for a general in separate command; and accordingly, after the first campaign of 1796, he was never intrusted by Napoleon with the direction of any considerable operations. He was brave in person, firm in conduct, and severe in discipline; but, though he gained the battle of Mondovi, and took Mantua, he was not in general fortunate in his operations, and became a marshal of France with less military glory than any of his other illustrious compeers.²

² Biog. des
Cont. xix.
159. Nap.
iii. 190.

54.
State of the
Allied
forces.

The Allies, on their side, had above fifty thousand men, and two hundred pieces of cannon; while the Sardinian army, of twenty-four thousand, guarded the avenues of Dauphiné and Savoy, and was opposed to the army of Kellermann, of nearly equal strength. Their forces were thus distributed: Beaulieu, a veteran of seventy-five, with thirty thousand combatants, entirely Austrians, and one hundred and forty pieces of cannon, was on the extreme right of the French, and in communication with the English fleet;³ while Colli, with twenty

³ Th. viii.
223. Jom.
viii. 57.
Nap. iii.
134, 136.
Hard. iii.
304, 305.

thousand men, and sixty pieces, was in a line with him to the north, and covered Ceva and Coni. Generally speaking, the French occupied the crest of the mountains, while the Allies were stationed in the valleys leading to the eastward, into the Italian plains.

Napoleon arrived at Nice on the 27th March, and soon gave indications of the great designs which he was meditating, by the following striking proclamation to his troops: — “Soldiers! you are almost naked, half-starved: the government owes you much, and can give you nothing. Your patience, your courage, in the midst of these rocks, have been admirable, but they reflect no splendour on your arms. I am about to conduct you into the most fertile plains of the earth. Rich provinces, opulent cities, will soon be in your power: there you will find abundant harvests, honour and glory. Soldiers of Italy, will you fail in courage?” “Famine, cold, and misery,” said the young general, “these are the school of good soldiers.”* His plan was to penetrate into Piedmont by the Col de Cadibone, the lowest part of the ridge which divides France from Italy, and separate the Austrian from the Piedmontese army, by pressing with the weight of his forces on the weak cordon which united them. For this purpose, it was necessary that the bulk of the troops should assemble on the extreme right — a delicate and perilous operation in presence of a superior enemy, but which was rendered comparatively safe by the snow which encumbered the lofty ridges that separated the two armies. Early in April, the whole French columns were in motion towards Genoa, while the French minister demanded from the senate of that city permission to pass the Bochetta, and the keys of Gavi — that being the chief route from the coasts to the interior of Piedmont. At the same time Beaulieu, in obedience to

55.
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paign.

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1796.

58.
Its great
conse-
quences.
Action at
Millesimo.

movements of Beaulieu, who had advanced unopposed beyond Voltri. He hastened back with the bulk of his forces to Dego; but such was the circuit they were obliged to take, that it was two days before he arrived at that place to support the ruined centre of his line.

This victory, by opening to the French the plains of Piedmont, and piercing the centre of the Allies, completely separated the Austrian and Sardinian armies; the former concentrated at Dego to cover the road to Milan, and the latter round Millesimo to protect the entrance into Piedmont. Napoleon, in possession of a central position, resolved to attack them both at once, although, by drawing together their detachments from all quarters, they had more than repaired the losses of Montenotte. On the 13th, Augereau, on the left, assailed the forces at Millesimo, where the Piedmontese were posted; while the divisions of Massena and la Harpe descended the valley and moved towards Dego. With such fury was the attack on the Piedmontese conducted that the passes were forced, and General Provera, who commanded, was driven, with two thousand men, into the ruins of the old castle of Cossario. He was immediately assaulted there by superior forces; but the Piedmontese, skilled in mountain warfare, poured down upon their adversaries such a shower of stones and rocks that whole companies were swept away at once, and Joubert,¹ who was in front

¹ Nap. iii.
143, 144.
Hard. iii.
312, 313.
Th. viii.
229.

he was at length made prisoner after a desperate resistance. Being afterwards exchanged, he returned to his paternal home at Pont-de-Vaux, where he narrowly escaped destruction in consequence of the indignant vehemence with which, in a club of which he was a member, he denounced the sanguinary and atrocious cruelty of Albitte, the commissioner of the Convention, who was then desolating the department. In 1794 he was appointed adjutant-general to the army of the Alps; and, in July 1795, he was unsuccessful in an attack on a fortified position at Melagno, occupied by three thousand grenadiers. Kellermann, however, who saw his abilities, continued him in the command, notwithstanding this reverse. He distinguished himself by his conduct and intrepidity at the battle of Loano, on which occasion he was made general of brigade on the field of battle, which rank he held when Napoleon took the command of the army in April 1796. He had the soul of a hero as well as the eye of a general; and was distinguished, like Napoleon, Hoche, and Desaix, by that ardent spirit and thirst for glory, which is the invariable characteristic of great minds.—See *Biographie Universelle* (Joubert), xxii. 47.

animating the soldiers, was wounded. After many ineffectual efforts, the Republicans desisted on the approach of night, and intrenched themselves at the foot of the eminence on which the castle was situated, to prevent the escape of the garrison.

The following day was decisive : Colli and the Piedmontese on the left made repeated efforts to disengage Provera, but their exertions were in vain ; and after seeing all their columns repulsed, that brave officer, destitute of provisions and water, was compelled to lay down his arms, with fifteen hundred men. Meanwhile Napoleon himself, with the divisions of Massena and la Harpe, attacked and carried Dego after an obstinate resistance, while Joubert made himself master of the heights of Biestro. The retreat of the Austrians was obstructed by the artillery, which blocked up the road in the defile of Spegno, and the soldiers had no other resource but to disperse and seek their safety on the mountains. Thirteen pieces of artillery and three thousand prisoners fell into the hands of the victors. No sooner was this success achieved, than the indefatigable conqueror moved forward the division of Augereau, now disengaged by the surrender of Provera, to the important heights of Monte Zemolo, the occupation of which completed the separation of the Austrian and Piedmontese armies. Beaulieu retired to Acqui, on the road to Milan, and Colli towards Ceva, to cover Turin.¹

Meanwhile the brave Wukassowich, at the head of six thousand Austrian grenadiers, made a movement which, if supported, might have completely re-established the affairs of the Allies. Separated from the body of the Imperial forces, he advanced from Voltri to Dego, with the intention of forming a junction with d'Argenteau, who he imagined still occupied that place. Great was his surprise when he found it in the hands of the enemy ; but instantly taking his resolution, like a brave man, he attacked and carried the place, making prisoners

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XX.

1796.

50.
And at
Dego.
April 14.1 Nap. iii.
143, 144.
Th. viii.
229, 230.
Hard. iii.
312, 315.60.
Bold advance of
Wukassowich to
Dego, which
in the end
fails.

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1796.

six hundred French, and regaining all the artillery lost on the preceding day. But this success not being supported by the other divisions of the Allied army, which were in full retreat, only led to the destruction of the brave men who had achieved it. Napoleon rapidly returned to the spot, and commenced a vigorous attack with superior forces. They were received with such gallantry by the Austrians, that the Republican columns were in the first instance repulsed in disorder, and the general-in-chief hastened to the spot to restore the combat ; but at length General Lanusse, putting his hat on the point of his sword, led them back to the charge, and carried the place, with the loss of fifteen hundred men to the Imperialists, who escaped with difficulty by the road to Acqui, after abandoning all the artillery they had retaken. In this action Napoleon was particularly struck by the gallantry of a young chief of battalion, whom he made a colonel on the spot, and who continued ever after the companion of his glory. His name was LANNES, afterwards Duke of Montebello, and one of the most heroic marshals of the empire.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
85. Nap.
iii. 145.

61.
Early his-
tory of
Lannes.

Jean Lannes was born at Lesboure, on the 11th April 1769, in the same year with Ney, Wellington, and a host of other heroes. He was descended of humble and obscure parents, and was at first bred to the trade of a dyer, which he quitted in 1792, to enrol himself in a battalion of volunteers. It was soon discovered that he had marked talents for war, and the suffrages of his fellow-soldiers rapidly raised him to the rank of colonel, which he attained in the close of 1793, during which year he had served with his regiment in the army of the Eastern Pyrenees. After the 9th Thermidor, however, he was deprived of his command, as well as Napoleon and Massena, in consequence of their connexion with the younger Robespierre and the extreme Jacobin party ; and being without employment, he returned to Paris, where he formed an acquaintance with both these generals. Massena

and he served together under Napoleon on occasion of the revolt of the sections on the 13th Vendemiaire, and the services they then rendered at once reinstated them in the favour of government. When Napoleon received the command of the Army of Italy, Lannes solicited and received leave to accompany him, and he was immediately placed at the head of a regiment, which distinguished itself in the highest degree in the course of the campaign.¹

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XX.

1796.
1 Vie de
Lannes.
Paris, 1810.
p. 3, 67.
Biog. Univ.
xxix. 474.
(Monte-
bello.)

Lannes was one of the greatest generals which the French Revolution produced. "His talent," said Napoleon "was equal to his bravery. He was at once the Roland of the army, and a giant in capacity. He had great experience in war, had been in fifty-four pitched battles, and three hundred combats. He was cool in the midst of fire, and possessed a clear penetrating eye, ready to take advantage of any opportunity which might present itself. Violent and hasty in his temper, sometimes even in my presence, he was yet ardently attached to me. As a general, he was greatly superior to either Moreau or Soult." In his private character, however, this great general never recovered the defects of his early education. He was ignorant on all matters excepting his profession, coarse in conversation, often irritable in temper, vehement in anger, and altogether destitute of the lighter graces, which soften and adorn the military character.²

62.
His cha-
racter.

² O'Meara,
i. 239. Las
Cas. ii. 374.
D'Abr. vi.
326.

After the battle of Dego, la Harpe's division was placed to keep in check the shattered remains of Beaulieu's forces, while the weight of the army was moved against the Sardinian troops. Augereau drove the Piedmontese from the Monte Zemolo, and soon after the main body of the army arrived upon the same ridge. From thence the eye could discover the immense and fertile plains of Piedmont. The Po, the Tanaro, the Stura, and a multitude of smaller streams, were descried in the distance at the foot of the mountains, meandering in infant beauty; beyond them the blue plains of Italy

63.
Arrival of
the Repub-
licans on the
Monte
Zemolo.

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XX.

1796.

bounded the horizon; while a glittering semicircle of snow and ice, of a prodigious elevation, seemed to enclose within its mighty walls the promised land. A sublime spectacle met the troops when they arrived on this elevated point; and the soldiers, exhausted with fatigue, and overwhelmed by the grandeur of the sight, paused and gazed on the plains beneath. Those gigantic barriers, which nature had rendered so formidable, and on which art had lavished its treasures, had fallen as if by enchantment. "Hannibal," said Napoleon, fixing his eyes on the mountains, "forced the Alps, but we have turned them." Soon after, the troops descended the steep slopes of the ridge, passed the Tanaro, and found themselves in the valleys which stretch up into the mountains from the Italian plains.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
147. Th.
viii. 233.

64.
Actions of
Serrurier
with Colli.
Danger of
Napoleon.
19th April.

Serrurier was now detached by the bridge of St Michael to turn the right of Colli, who occupied the intrenched camp of Ceva, while Massena passed the Tanaro to turn his left. The Piedmontese, who were about eight thousand strong, defended the camp in the first instance with success; but, finding their communications on the point of being lost, they retired in the night, and took a position behind the deep and rapid torrent of the Cursaglia. There they were assailed, on the following day, by Serrurier, who forced the bridge of St Michael; while Joubert, who had waded through the torrent farther up, in vain endeavoured to induce his followers to pass, and was obliged, after incurring the greatest risks, to retire. Thus relieved from all anxiety about his flank, Colli fell with all his forces on Serrurier, and, after a severe action, drove him back again over the bridge, with the loss of six hundred men. This check exposed Napoleon to imminent danger. The Sardinian general occupied a strong position in his front, while Beaulieu, with an army still formidable, was in his rear, and might easily resume offensive operations. A council of war was held in the night, at which it was unanimously

resolved, notwithstanding the fatigue of the troops, to resume the attack on the following day. All the dispositions, accordingly, were made for a renewed assault on the bridge, with increased forces; but, on arriving at the advanced posts at daybreak, they found them abandoned by the enemy, who had fought only in order to gain time for the evacuation of the magazines in his rear, and had retired in the night to Mondovi. He was overtaken, however, in his retreat, near that place, by the indefatigable victor, and immediately took up a strong position, where he hoped to arrest the enemy. The Republicans advanced to the assault; and though Serrurier was defeated in the centre by the brave Austrian grenadiers of Dichat, yet that courageous general having been struck dead by a cannon-ball at the moment when his troops, somewhat disordered by success, were assailed in flank by superior forces, the Piedmontese were thrown into confusion, and Serrurier, resuming the offensive, attacked and carried the redoubt of Bicoque, the principal defence of the position, and gained the victory. Colli retired to Chierasco, with the loss of two thousand men, eight cannon, and eleven standards.¹

Thither he was followed by Napoleon, who occupied that town, which, though a fortified place, and important from its position at the confluence of the Stura and the Tanaro, was not armed, and incapable of resistance. By so doing, he not only acquired a firm footing in the interior of Piedmont, but made himself master of extensive magazines. This important success speedily changed the situation of the French army. Having descended from the sterile and inhospitable summits of the Alps, they found themselves, though still among the mountains, in communication with the rich and fertile plains of Italy; provisions were obtained in abundance, and, with the introduction of regularity in the supplies, the pillage and disorders consequent upon prior privations disappeared. The soldiers, animated with success, speedily recovered

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

21st April.

¹ Th. viii.
233, 234.
Nap. iii.
150. Jom.
viii. 88, 95.
Hard. iii.
310.

65.
Immense
advantages
gained by
the French
by these
operations.

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XX.

1796.

¹ Jom. viii.
66. Nap.
iii. 150.

66.
Consternation of the
court of
Turin.
They resolve
to submit to
France.

from their fatigues ; the stragglers, and those left behind in the mountains, rejoined their colours ; and the bands of conscripts from the depots in the interior eagerly pressed forward to share in the glories, and partake the spoils, of the Italian army. In a short time the Republicans, notwithstanding their losses, were as strong as at the commencement of the campaign ; while the Allies, besides having been driven from the ridge of the Alps, the barrier of Piedmont, were weakened by the loss of above twelve thousand men and forty pieces of cannon. The effect of these successes was such, that the Allies every where retired from the field ; and the French army, emerging from the mountain valleys, entered the vast plain of Piedmont, and in a few days appeared before the gates of Turin.¹

The court of Victor Amadeus was now in the utmost consternation, and opinions were strongly divided as to the course which should be pursued. The ministers of Austria and Great Britain urged the King, who was by no means deficient in firmness, to imitate the glorious example of his ancestors, and abandon his capital. But as a preliminary to so decided a step, they insisted that the fortresses of Tortona, Alessandria, and Valence, should be put into the possession of the Austrians, in order to give Beaulieu a solid footing on the Po ; and to this sacrifice in favour of a rival power, he could not be brought to submit. At length the Cardinal Costa persuaded him to throw himself into the arms of the French, and Colli was authorised to open negotiations. This was one of the numerous instances in the history of Napoleon, in which his audacity not only extricated him from the most perilous situations, but gave him the most splendid triumphs ; for at this period, by his own admission, the French army was in very critical circumstances. He had neither heavy cannon nor a siege equipage to reduce Turin, Alessandria, or the numerous other fortresses of Piedmont, without the possession of which it would have

been extremely hazardous to have penetrated farther into the country: the Allied armies, united, were still superior to the French, and their cavalry, of such vital importance in the plains, had not at all suffered; while his own troops, confounded at their own achievements, and as yet unaccustomed to such rapid success, were beginning to hesitate as to the expedience of any farther advance. "The King of Sardinia," says Napoleon, "had still a great number of fortresses left; and, in spite of the victories which had been gained, the slightest check, one caprice of fortune, would have undone every thing."¹

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1796.

¹ Nap. iii.
151, 152,
193. Hard.
iii. 323, 326.
Jom. viii.
96, 97.

It was, therefore, with the most lively satisfaction that Napoleon received the advances of the Sardinian government; but he insisted that, as a preliminary to any armistice, the fortresses of Coni, Tortona, and Alessandria should be put into his hands. The Piedmontese commissioners were at first disposed to resist this demand; but Napoleon sternly replied — "It is for me to impose conditions — your ideas are absurd: listen to the laws which I impose upon you, in the name of the government of my country, and obey, or to-morrow my batteries are erected, and Turin is in flames." These words so intimidated the Piedmontese, that they returned in consternation to their capital, where all opposition speedily gave way. After some negotiation, the treaty was concluded, the principal conditions of which were, that the King of Sardinia should abandon the alliance, and send an ambassador to Paris to conclude a definite peace; that in the mean time, Ceva, Coni, and Tortona, or, failing it, Alessandria, should be delivered up to the French army, with all the artillery and magazines they contained; that the victors should continue to occupy all the positions which at present were in their possession; that Valence should be instantly ceded to the Republicans in lieu of the Neapolitans;² that the militia should be disbanded, and the regular troops dispersed

67.
Armistice.
Its condi-
tions.

27th April.

² Nap. iii.
155. Hard.
iii. 328.
Jom. viii.
93.

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

68.

Followed by
a treaty of
peace be-
tween
France and
Sardinia.
15th May.

in the fortified places, so as to give no umbrage to the French.

The armistice was followed, a fortnight after, by a treaty of peace between the King of Sardinia and the French Republic. By it his Sardinian Majesty finally renounced the coalition; ceded to the Republic, Savoy, Nice, and the whole possessions of Piedmont to the westward of the highest ridge of the Alps, (extending from Mount St Bernard by Mount Genève to Roccabarbore near Genoa;) and granted a free passage through his dominions to the troops of the French nation. The importance of this accommodation may be judged of by the letter of Napoleon to the Directory the day the armistice was signed—"Coni, Ceva, and Alessandria are in the hands of our army: if you do not ratify the convention, I will keep these fortresses, and march upon Turin. Meanwhile, I shall march to-morrow against Beaulieu, and drive him across the Po; I shall follow close at his heels, overrun all Lombardy, and in a month be in the Tyrol, join the army of the Rhine, and carry our united forces into Bavaria. That design is worthy of you, of the army, and of the destinies of France. If you continue your confidence in me, I shall answer for the results, and Italy is at your feet."¹

¹ Corresp. Secrète de Nap. 28, Avril. Jom. viii. 102.

69.

Its immense
importance
to Napo-
leon.

This treaty was of more service to the French general than many victories. It gave him a firm footing in Piedmont; artillery and stores for the siege of Turin, if the final conditions should not be agreed to by the Directory; general stores and magazines in abundance, and a direct communication with Genoa and France for the future supplies of the army. Napoleon, from the solid base of the Piedmontese fortresses, was now enabled to turn his undivided attention to the destruction of the Austrians, and thus commence, with some security, that great career of conquest which he already meditated in the Imperial dominions. Nevertheless, a large proportion of his troops and officers openly condemned the

conclusion of any treaty of peace with a monarchical government ; and insisted that the opportunity should not have been suffered to escape, of establishing a revolutionary government in the frontier state of Italy. But Napoleon — whose head was too strong to be carried away by the theories of democracy, and who already gave indications of that resolution to detach himself from the cause of revolution by which he was ever after so strongly distinguished — replied, that the first duty of the army was to secure a firm base for future operations ; that it was on the Adige that the French standard must be established to protect Italy from the Imperialists ; that it was impossible to advance thus far without being secured in their rear ; that a revolutionary government in Piedmont would require constant assistance, scatter alarm through Italy, and prove a source of weakness rather than strength ; whereas the Sardinian fortresses at once put the Republicans in possession of the keys of the Peninsula.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
157, 161.
Th. viii.
237.

At the same time he despatched to Paris his aide-de-camp, Murat, with the standards taken, and addressed to his soldiers one of those exaggerated but eloquent proclamations which, by captivating the minds of men, contributed as much as his victories to his astonishing success “ Soldiers ! you have gained in fifteen days six victories, taken one-and-twenty standards, fifty-five pieces of cannon, many strong places, and conquered the richest part of Piedmont ; you have made fifteen thousand prisoners, killed or wounded ten thousand men. Hitherto you have fought on sterile rocks, rendered illustrious, indeed, by your courage, but of no avail to your country ; now you rival, by your services, the armies of the Rhine and the North. Destitute at first, you have supplied every thing. You have gained battles without cannons ; passed rivers without bridges ; made forced marches without shoes ; bivouacked without bread ! The phalanxes of the Republic — the soldiers of liberty — were alone capable of such

70.
His triumphant proclamation to his soldiers. General intoxication at Paris.

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XX.

1796.

sacrifices. But, soldiers! you have done nothing while any thing remains to do. Neither Turin nor Milan is in your hands; the ashes of the conqueror of Tarquin are still trampled on by the assassins of Basseville! I am told that there are some among you whose courage is giving way—who would rather return to the summits of the Alps and the Apennines. No—I cannot believe it. The conquerors of Montenotte, of Millesimo, of Dego, of Mondovi, burn to carry still farther the glories of the French name!" When these successive victories, these standards, these proclamations, arrived day after day at Paris, the joy of the people knew no bounds. The first day the gates of the Alps were opened; the next, the Austrians were separated from the Piedmontese; the third, the Sardinian army was destroyed, and the fortresses surrendered. The rapidity of the success, the number of the prisoners, exceeded all that had yet been witnessed. Every one asked, who was this young hero whose fame had burst forth so suddenly—who, like Cæsar, had at once come, seen, and conquered, and whose proclamations breathed the fervour of ancient glory? Three times the Councils decreed that the army of Italy had deserved well of their country, and appointed a *fête* to Victory, in honour of the commencement of the campaign.¹

¹ Th. viii.
240, 241.
Hard. iii.
333.

71.
Designs of
Napoleon.

2d May.

Having secured his rear by this advantageous treaty, Napoleon lost no time in pursuing the discomfited remains of Beaulieu's army, which had retired behind the Po, in the hope of covering the Milanese territory. The forces of the Austrians were plainly now unequal to the struggle; a *coup-de-main*, which Beaulieu attempted on the fortresses of Alessandria, Tortona, and Valence, failed, and they were immediately after surrendered to the Republicans, while the corps of Kellermann was about to be united to the army of Napoleon, and the possession, by the conclusion of the armistice, of the Col de Tende, the principal passage in that quarter from France into Italy, now rendered disposable a reinforcement of above twenty thousand men.

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1796.

1. Jom. viii.
110, 112.
Th. viii. 253.
Hard. iii.
237. Nap.
iii. 164, 165.

Napoleon, on his side, indulged the most brilliant anticipations; and confidently announced to the Directory that he would cross the Po, expel the Austrians from the Milanese territory, traverse the mountains of the Tyrol, unite with the army of the Rhine, and carry the war, by the valley of the Danube, into the heart of the Imperial dominions.^{1*}

By inserting a clause in the treaty with the King of Sardinia, that the French army was to be at liberty to cross the Po at Valence, he completely deceived the Austrians as to the place where the passage was to be effected. The whole attention of Beaulieu having been drawn to that point, the Republican forces were rapidly moved to Placentia, and began to cross the river in boats at the latter place. Lannes was the first who effected the passage, and the other columns soon passed with such rapidity that a firm footing was obtained on the opposite bank; and two days afterwards Napoleon arrived with the bulk of his forces, and established a bridge. By this skilful march, not only the Po was passed, but the Tessino turned, as Placentia is below its junction with the former river; so that one great obstacle to the conquest of Lombardy was already removed.²

72.
Crosses the
Po, and pro-
ceeds against
Beaulieu.

7th May.

2 Nap. iii.
163. Th.
viii. 254.
257. Jom.
viii. 116.

Beaulieu, however, was now considerably reinforced, and his forces amounted to thirty-six battalions and forty-four squadrons, besides one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon—in all, nearly forty thousand men. He was at Pavia, busily engaged in erecting fortifications,

73.
Action at
Fombio.

* Buonaparte wrote to the Directory at this period—"The King of Sardinia has surrendered at discretion, given up three of his strongest fortresses, and the half of his dominions. If you do not choose to accept his submission, but resolve to dethrone him, you must amuse him for a few weeks, and give me warning: I will get possession of Valence, and march upon Turin. On the other hand, I shall impose a contribution of some millions on the Duke of Parma, detach twelve thousand men to Rome, as soon as I have beaten Beaulieu and driven him across the Adige, and then I am assured that you will conclude peace with the King of Sardinia, and strengthen me by the army of Kellermann. As to Genoa, by all means oblige it to pay fifteen millions."—*Secret Despatch to the Directory, 29th April 1796. Corres. Secrète de Napoleon*, i. 103.

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when he received intelligence of the passage at Placentia. He immediately moved forward his advanced guard, consisting of three thousand infantry, and two thousand horse, under General Liptay, to Fombio, a small town a short distance from the Republican posts. Napoleon, who feared that he might be strengthened in this position, and was well aware of the danger of fighting a general battle with a great river in his rear, lost no time in advancing his forces to dislodge him. D'Allemagne, at the head of the grenadiers, attacked on the right; Lanusse by the chaussée on the centre; and Lannes on the left. After a vigorous resistance, the Austrians were expelled from the town, with the loss of above a thousand men. Liptay fell back to Pizzighitone. Meanwhile, Beaulieu was advancing with the bulk of his forces; and the leading division of his army surprised General la Harpe in the night, who was killed bravely fighting at the head of his division, but not until the Austrians had been compelled to retire.¹

¹ Th. viii.
258. Nap.
iii. 166.
Jom. viii.
117.

74.
Capitulation of the
Grand-duke
of Parma.
Commencement of the
spoliation of
the works
of art.

The French troops having now entered the territory of Parma, it was of importance to establish matters on a pacific footing in their rear before pressing forward to Milan. The Grand-duke had no military resources whatever; the victor, therefore, resolved to grant him terms, upon the surrender of what he had to give. He was obliged to pay two millions of francs in silver, and to furnish sixteen hundred artillery-horses, of which the army stood much in need, besides great supplies of corn and provisions. But on this occasion Napoleon commenced another species of military contribution, which he has himself confessed was unparalleled in modern warfare, that of exacting from the vanquished the surrender of their most precious works of art. Parma was compelled to give up twenty of its principal paintings, among which was the celebrated St Jerome by Correggio. The Duke offered a million of francs as a ransom for that inestimable work of art, which many of his officers urged the French

general to accept, as of much more service to the army than the painting; but Napoleon, whose mind was fixed on greater things, replied—"The million which he offers us would soon be spent; but the possession of such a *chef-d'œuvre* at Paris will adorn that capital for ages, and give birth to similar exertions of genius."¹

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¹ Nap. iii.
169. Th.
viii. 255.

Thus commenced the system of seizing the great works of art in the conquered states, which the French generals afterwards carried to such a height, and which finally produced the noble gallery of the Louvre. The French have since had good reason to congratulate themselves that the Allies did not follow their bad example; and that, on occasion of the second capture of Paris, their victors had the generosity to content themselves with enforcing restitution of the abstracted spoils, without, like them, compelling the surrender of those that had been legitimately acquired. Certainly, it is impossible to condemn too strongly a use of the powers of conquest, which extends the ravages of war into the peaceful domain of the fine arts; which transplants the monuments of genius from the regions where they have arisen, and where their value is appreciated, to those where they are exotics, and their merit is probably little understood; which renders them, instead of being the proud legacy of genius to mankind, the mere trophy of a victor's glory; which exposes them to be tossed about by the tide of conquest, and subjected to irreparable injury in following the fleeting career of success; and converts works, destined to elevate and captivate the human race, into the subject of angry contention, and the badge of temporary subjugation.

75.
Reflections
on its atro-
city.

On the 8th, Napoleon marched towards Milan; but, before proceeding to that city, he required to drive the Austrians from the line of the Adda, which they held, strongly guarded. The wooden bridge of LODI, over that river, was occupied by a powerful rearguard, consisting of twelve thousand Austrian infantry and four thousand

76.
Terrible
passage of
the Bridge
of Lodi.
May 8.

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10th May.

horse ; while the remainder of their forces had retired to Crema, the right wing still holding firm at Cassano, and the neighbourhood of Milan. By a rapid advance, he hoped to cut off the bulk of their troops from the Hereditary States, and make them prisoners ; but as there was not a moment to be lost in achieving the movements requisite to attain this object, he resolved to force the bridge, and thus get into their rear. He himself arrived at Lodi, at the head of the grenadiers of d'Allemagne, upon which the Austrians withdrew from the town, and crossed the river, drawing up their infantry, with twenty pieces of cannon, at the further extremity of the bridge, to defend the passage. Napoleon immediately directed Beaumont, with all the cavalry of the army, to pass at a ford half a league further up ; while he himself directed all the artillery which had arrived against the Austrian battery, and formed six thousand grenadiers in close column, under cover of the houses at his own end of the bridge. No sooner did he perceive that the discharge of the Austrian artillery was beginning to slacken, from the effect of the French fire, and that the passage of the cavalry on their flank had commenced, than, addressing a few animating words to his soldiers, he gave the signal to advance. The grenadiers pushed on in double-quick time, through a cloud of smoke, over the long and narrow defile of the bridge. The terrible storm of grape-shot for a little arrested their progress ; the front ranks were entirely swept away : but those in rear, finding themselves supported by a cloud of tirailleurs, who waded the stream below the arches, and led with heroic courage by their general, soon recovered, and, rushing forward with resistless fury, carried the Austrian guns, and drove back their infantry. Had the French cavalry been ready to profit by the confusion, the whole corps of the Imperialists would have been destroyed ; but, as it had not yet come up, their numerous squadrons protected the retreat of the infantry, who retired with the loss of two thousand men, and

twenty pieces of cannon. The loss of the victors was at least as great. The object of this bold measure was indeed lost, for the Austrians, whom it had been intended to cut off, had meanwhile gained the chaussée of Brescia, and made good their retreat: but it contributed greatly to exalt the character and elevate the courage of the Republican troops, by inspiring them with the belief that nothing could resist them: and it made a deep impression on the mind of Napoleon, who ever after styled it the "terrible passage of the bridge of Lodi."^{1*}

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1 Jom. viii.
123, 126.
Scott, iii.
131. Bot.
iii. 351.
Nap. iii.
172-174.
Th. viii. 260,
261.

This victory also powerfully increased the confidence of the soldiers in their young commander. After each success, the old soldiers, who had at first been somewhat distrustful of him, assembled, and gave him a new step of promotion. He was made a corporal at Lodi; and the surname of "Le Petit Caporal," thence acquired, was long remembered in the army. When, in 1815, he was met by the battalion sent against him from the fortress of Grenoble, the soldiers, the moment they saw him, exclaimed, "Long live our little corporal! we will never oppose him." Nor did this fearful passage produce a less powerful impression on the mind of the general. "The 13th Vendemiaire, and the victory of Montenotte," said Napoleon, "did not induce me to believe myself a superior character. It was after the passage of Lodi that the idea shot across my mind, that I might become a decisive actor on the political theatre. Then arose, for the first time, the spark of great ambition."²

77.
Great effect
of this vic-
tory.

² Las Cas.
162, 182.

After this disaster, Beaulieu retired behind the Mincio, leaving Milan to its fate; and Pizzighettone, with its garrison of five hundred men, capitulated. Serrurier was placed at Cremona, from whence he observed the garrison of Mantua; while Augereau pushed on from Pizzighettone to Pavia.³ On the 15th, Napoleon made his triumphal entry into Milan at the head of his troops, with all the

78.
Napoleon
enters
Milan.

³ Th. viii.
263. Nap.
iii. 176.
Jom. viii.
127.

* The bridge of Lodi exactly resembles the wooden bridge over the Clyde at Glasgow, both in form, materials, and length.—*Personal observation.*

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pomp of war, to the sound of military music, amidst the acclamations of an immense concourse of spectators, and through the lines of the national guard, dressed in three colours, in honour of the triumph of the tricolor flag.

79.
His proclamation there
to his troops.

On this occasion the conqueror addressed to his soldiers another of those heart-stirring proclamations which so powerfully contributed to electrify the ardent imagination of the Italians, and added so much to the influence of his victories.—“Soldiers! you have descended like a torrent from the summit of the Apennines; you have overwhelmed and dispersed every thing which opposed your progress. Piedmont, delivered from the tyranny of Austria, has felt itself at liberty to indulge its natural inclination for peace, and for a French alliance; Milan is in your hands; and the Republican standards wave over the whole of Lombardy. The Dukes of Parma and Modena owe their existence only to your generosity. The army which menaced you with so much pride, can now no longer find a barrier to protect itself against your arms; the Po, the Tessino, the Adda, have not been able to stop you a single day: these boasted bulwarks of Italy have proved as nugatory as the Alps. Such a career of success has carried joy into the bosom of your country: fêtes in honour of your victories have been ordered by the national representatives in all the communes of the Republic; there, your parents, your wives, your sisters, your lovers, rejoice at your success, and glory in their connexion with you. Yes, soldiers! you have indeed done much; but much still remains to be done. Shall posterity say that we knew how to conquer, but not how to improve victory? Shall we find a Capua in Lombardy? The hour of vengeance has struck, but the people of all nations may rest in peace; we are the friends of every people, and especially of the descendants of Brutus, Scipio, and the other great men whom we have taken for examples. To restore the Capitol; to replace there the statues of the heroes who have rendered it immortal; to rouse the

Romans from centuries of slavery—such will be the fruit of our victories: they will form an era in history; to you will belong the glory of having changed the face of the most beautiful part of Europe. The French people, free within and dreaded without, will give to Europe a glorious peace, which will indemnify her for all the sacrifices she has made for the last six years. Then you will return to your homes, and your fellow-citizens will say of each of you in passing—‘He was a soldier in the army of Italy!’”ⁱ

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ⁱ Moniteur,
May 22,
1796. Nap.
iii. 178.

Great was the enthusiasm, unbounded the joy, which these unparalleled successes and eloquent words excited among all that ardent and generous part of the Italian people, who panted for civil liberty and national independence. To them Napoleon appeared as the destined regenerator of Italy, the hero who was to achieve their liberation from Transalpine oppression, and bring back the glorious days of Roman virtue. His burning words, his splendid actions, the antique character of his thoughts, diffused a universal enchantment. Even the coolest heads began to turn at the brilliant career thus begun, by a general not yet eight-and-twenty years of age, and the boundless anticipations of future triumph, of which he spoke with prophetic certainty. From every part of Italy the young and the ardent flocked to Milan; balls and festivities gave token of the universal joy; every word and look of the conqueror was watched; the patriots compared him to Scipio and Hannibal, and the ladies on the popular side knew no bounds in their adulation.²

80.
Enthusiasm
excited by
his successes
among the
democratic
party in
Italy.

² Bot. 356-
358. Th.
viii. 265.

But this illusion was of short duration, and Italy was soon destined to experience the bitter fate and cruel degradation of every people who look for their deliverance to foreign assistance. In the midst of the general joy, a contribution of twenty millions of francs, or £800,000 sterling, struck Milan with astonishment, and wounded the Italians in their tenderest part—their domestic and economical arrangements. So enormous a contribution

81.
Cruel dis-
pelling of
the illusion
by the
French
contribu-
tions.

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17th May.

¹ Th. viii.
265. Jom.
viii. 130.
Nap. iii. 183.

82.
Commence-
ment of the
system of
making war
support war.

upon a single city seemed scarcely possible to be realised ; but the sword of the victor offered no alternative. Great requisitions were at the same time made of horses, for the artillery and cavalry, in all the Milanese territory ; and provisions were amassed on all sides at the expense of the inhabitants, for which they received nothing, or Republican paper of no value. Nor did the Duke of Modena escape more easily. He was compelled to purchase peace by a contribution of ten millions of francs in money or stores for the army, and to submit to the exaction of twenty paintings from his gallery for the Republican museum. Liberated Italy was treated with more severity than is generally the lot of conquered states.¹

Thus commenced the system of "making war support war," which contributed so much to the early success of the Republican arms, which compensated for all the penury and exhaustion of the Republican territory, which raised to the clouds the glory of the Empire, and brought about inevitably its ultimate destruction. France, abounding with men, but destitute of money — incapable of supporting war by its own resources, from the entire stoppage of domestic industry, but teeming with a restless and indigent population, let loose on the world from that very cause—found in this system the means of advancement and opulence. While the other armies of the Republic were suffering under the horrors of penury, and could hardly find food for their support, or clothes for their covering, the army of Italy was rolling in opulence, and the spoils of vanquished states gave them every enjoyment of life. From that time there was no want of soldiers to follow the career of the conqueror ; the prospect of glory and plunder brought willing crowds to his standard. The passes of the Alps were covered with files of troops, pressing forward to the theatre of renown ; and all the chasms occasioned by the relentless system of war which he followed, were filled up by the multitudes whom the illusion of victory brought to his ranks. But the

Republican soldiers were far from anticipating the terrible reverses to which this system of spoliation was ultimately to lead, or that France was destined to groan under exactions as severe as those she now so liberally inflicted upon others. Clothed, fed, and lodged at the expense of the Milanese, the soldiers pursued with thoughtless eagerness the career of glory which had opened before them. The artillery, the cavalry, were soon in the finest condition; and hospitals were established for fifteen thousand patients or wounded, in the different towns in the conquered territory—for to that immense number had the rapidity of the marches, and the multiplicity of the combats, swelled the sick-list. Having amply provided for his own army, Napoleon despatched several millions by the route of ¹ Th. viii. 137, 265, 266. Nap. Cor. Conf. i. 159. Genoa for the service of the Directory, and one million over the Alps to Moreau, to relieve the pressing wants of the army of the Upper Rhine.¹

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These great successes already began to inspire the French government with jealousy of their lieutenant; and they in consequence transmitted an order by which Kellermann, with twenty thousand men, was to command on the left bank of the Po, and cover the siege of Mantua, while Napoleon, with the remainder of the forces, was to march upon Rome and Naples. But he was both too proud to submit to any division of his authority, and too sagacious not to see that, by thus separating the forces, and leaving only a small army in the north of Italy, the Austrians would speedily recover themselves, regain the decisive ground in that quarter on which the fate of the peninsula has always been decided, ere long drive their inconsiderable opponents over the Alps, and cut off, without the possibility of escape, the corps in the south of the peninsula. He therefore at once resigned his command, accompanying it with the observation, that one bad general is better than two good ones.² The Directory, however, unable to dispense with the services of their youthful officer, immediately reinstated him, and abandoned their

83.
The Directory, jealous of his power, orders Napoleon to march to Rome. He refuses.

² Th. viii. 269. Nap. iii. 184. Jom. viii. 133.

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84.
Alarming
insurrection
at Pavia.

project, which was indeed in itself so absurd that it would have thrown great doubts on the military capacity of Carnot, the minister at war, if it had not in reality been suggested by the wish to extinguish the rising ambition of Napoleon.*

In less than ten days after the occupation of Milan, national guards in the Republican interest were organised in the whole of Lombardy ; revolutionary authorities were every where established, and the country was rendered subservient to the military power of France. The garrison of two thousand men which Beaulieu had left in the citadel of Milan was closely invested, and the headquarters were moved to Lodi. But an event here occurred which threatened great danger to the French army, and was only prevented from proving calamitous by the decision and severity of its chief. Opinions were much divided in Italy, as in all states undergoing the crisis of a revolution, on the changes which were going forward. The lower classes in the towns had been moved by the equality which the French every where proclaimed ; but the peasantry in the country, less liable to the contagion of new principles, and more under the influence of the nobility and priests, were still firmly attached to the ancient régime, with which the Austrian authority was now identified.

* Napoleon on this occasion wrote to Carnot :—"Kellermann could command the army as well as I—for no one is more convinced than I am of the courage and daring of the soldiers—but to unite us together would ruin every thing. I will not serve with a man who considers himself the first general in Europe : and it is better to have one bad general than two good ones. War is, like government, decided in a great degree by tact." To the Directory he observed,—"It is in the highest degree impolitic to divide in two the army of Italy, and not less adverse to the interests of the Republic to place at its head two different generals. The expedition to Leghorn, Rome, and Naples, is a very inconsiderable matter, and should be made by divisions in echelon, ready, at a moment's warning, to wheel about and face the Austrians on the Adige. To perform it with success, both armies must be under the command of one general. I have hitherto conducted the campaign without consulting any one; the results would have been very different if I had been obliged to reconcile my views with those of another. If you impose upon me vexations of every description ; if I must refer all my steps to the commissaries of government ; if they are authorised to change my movements, to send away my troops—expect no further success. If you weaken your resources by dividing your forces—if you disturb in Italy the unity of military thought—I say it with grief, you

When men's minds were in this divided state, the prodigious contribution levied upon Milan, and the vast requisitions of provisions and horses which had been made for the use of the army, over the whole country districts, inflamed the rural population to the highest degree. The people of Lombardy did not consider themselves as conquered, nor expect to be treated as such: they had welcomed the French as deliverers, and now they found a severer yoke imposed upon them than that from which they had just escaped. Roused to indignation by such treatment, a general insurrection was rapidly organised over the whole of that beautiful district. An attack, in concert with a sortie from the garrison of the castle, was made on Milan; and, though it failed, the insurgents were more successful at Pavia, where the people rose against the garrison, forced it to capitulate, admitted eight thousand armed peasants within the walls, and closed their gates against the French troops.¹

¹ Th. viii.
272, 273.
Nap. iii. 191.
195. Jom.
viii. 136.

The danger was imminent; the tocsin sounded in all the parishes; the least retrograde movement would have augmented the evil, and compelled the retreat of the army, whose advanced posts were already on the Oglio. In these circumstances, prudence counselled temerity; and

85.
Storm and
sack of that
city by the
French
troops.

will lose the fairest opportunity that ever occurred of giving laws to that fine peninsula. In the position of the affairs of the Republic, it is indispensable that you possess a general who enjoys your confidence; if I do not do so, I shall not complain, and shall do my utmost to manifest my zeal in the service which you intrust to me. Every one has his own method of carrying on war; Kellermann has more experience, and may do it better than I; but, together, we would do nothing but mischief. Your resolution on this matter is of more importance than the fifteen thousand men whom the Emperor has just sent to Beaulieu."¹ But Buonaparte did not intrust this important matter merely to these arguments, strong as they were. Murat, who was still at Paris, received instructions to inform Barras that a million of francs were deposited at Genoa for his private use; and the influence of Josephine was employed with both him and Carnot to prevent the threatened division, and the result was that it was abandoned. "The Directory," said Carnot, "has maturely considered your arguments; and the confidence which they have in your talents and republican zeal have decided the matter in your favour. Kellermann will remain at Chambery, and you may adjourn the expedition to Rome as long as you please."—HARDENBERG, iii. 49, 351.

¹ Corresp.
Secrète de
Nap. i. 160,
162.

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Napoleon advanced in person to crush the insurgents. Their vanguard was routed by Lannes, and a hundred of the peasants killed; but, this severe example having failed in producing intimidation, he marched himself next day to the walls of Pavia, with six pieces of light artillery. The grenadiers rushed forward to the gates, which they forced open with hatchets: while the artillery cleared the ramparts, the victorious troops broke into the town, which the peasants precipitately abandoned to its fate. Napoleon, wishing to terrify the insurgents, ordered the magistrates and leaders of the revolt to be shot, and the city to be delivered up to plunder; while the unhappy peasants, pursued into the plain by the French dragoons, were cut down in great numbers. The pillage continued the whole day, and that opulent and flourishing town underwent all the horrors of war. But the terrible example crushed the insurrection over the whole of Lombardy, where tranquillity was speedily re-established, and hostages were taken from the principal families and despatched into France.¹

¹ Th. viii.
275. Nap.
iii. 194.
Jom. viii.
138. Bot. i.
390, 394.

86.
Moral tur-
pitude of
this mas-
sacre.

In this act was displayed another feature of Napoleon's character, who, without being unnecessarily cruel, never hesitated to adopt the most sanguinary measures when requisite for his own purposes. Pillage and rapine, indeed, invariably follow the capture of a town carried by assault, and it is impossible to prevent it; but Napoleon in this instance authorised it by a general order, and shot the leading persons of the city in cold blood. It is in vain to appeal to the usages of war for a vindication of such cruelty; the inhabitants of Pavia were not subjects of France, who were not entitled to resist its authority; they were Austrian citizens, alike called on and bound to defend their country from attack, or rescue it as soon as possible from the invader's grasp. Nor can it be said they were not soldiers, and that simple citizens have no right to interfere with the contests of hostile armies; the words of Napoleon himself furnish his own condem-

nation:—"It is the first duty," said the Emperor, in his proclamation to the peasantry of France, on March 5, 1814, "of every citizen to take up arms in defence of his country. Let *the peasantry* every where organise themselves in bands, with such weapons as they can find; let them fall upon the flanks and rear of the invaders; and let a consuming fire envelop the presumptuous host which has dared to violate the territory of the great nation."¹

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¹ Proclamation, March 5, 1814. Goldsmith's Recueil, vi. 645. *Infra*.

Having by this severity stifled the spirit of insurrection in his rear, Napoleon continued his march, and on the 28th entered the great city of Brescia, situated in the neutral territory of Venice. Meanwhile, Beaulieu experienced the usual fate of a retiring army, that of being weakened by the detachments necessary to garrison the fortified places which it leaves uncovered in its retreat. He threw twenty battalions of his best troops into Mantua, and took up a defensive position along the line of the Mincio. There he was assailed on the following day by Napoleon, who, after forcing the bridge of Borghetto, in front of his position, attacked his rearguard at Valleggio with all his cavalry, and made prisoners, in spite of the bravest efforts of the Austrian horse, twelve hundred men, and took five pieces of cannon. Upon this Beaulieu retired up the valley of the Adige, and took post at the strong position of Calliano in the Italian Tyrol.²

^{87.} Napoleon enters Brescia and the Venetian territory. 28th May.

29th May.

² Nap. iii. 202. Jom. viii. 139, 142.

When the French army entered the Venetian territory, and it had become evident that the flames of war were approaching its capital, it was warmly discussed in the Venetian senate what course the republic should pursue in the perilous circumstances that had occurred. Peschiera had been occupied by the Austrians, but, being abandoned by them, was instantly seized by the French, who insisted that, though a Venetian fortress, yet, having been taken possession of by one of the belligerent powers, it had now become the fair conquest of the other; and, at the same time, Napoleon threatened the republic with all the ven-

^{88.} Debates in the Venetian Senate on what should be done.

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geance of France, if the Count de Lille, afterwards Louis XVIII., who had resided for some years at Verona, was not immediately compelled to leave their territories. The Republican forces, under Massena, were advancing towards Verona, and it was necessary to take a decided course. On the one hand it was urged, that France had now proclaimed principles subversive of all regular governments, and in an especial manner inimical to the aristocracy of Venice ; that certain ruin, either from foreign violence or domestic revolution, was to be expected from their success ; that the haughty tone already assumed by the conqueror already showed that he looked upon all the continental possessions of the republic as his own, and was only waiting for an opportunity to seize them for the French nation ; and, therefore, that the sole course left was to throw themselves into the arms of Austria, the natural ally of all regular governments. On the other, it was contended that they must beware lest they mistook a temporary irruption of the Republicans for a permanent settlement ; that Italy had in every age been the tomb of the French armies ; that the forces of the present invader, how successful soever they had hitherto been, were unequal to a permanent occupation of the Peninsula, and would in the end yield to the persevering efforts of the Germans ; that Austria, therefore, the natural enemy of Venice, and the power which coveted, would in the end attempt to seize, its territorial possessions ; that their forces were now expelled from Lombardy, and could not resume the offensive for two months, a period which would suffice to the French general to destroy the Republic ; that interest, therefore, equally with prudence, prescribed that they should attach themselves to the cause of France, obtain thereby a barrier against the ambition of their powerful neighbour, and receive in recompense for their services part of the Italian dominions of the Austrian empire. That in so doing they must, it is true, to a certain degree modify their form of government ; but that was no more

than the spirit of the age required, and was absolutely indispensable to secure the preservation of their continental possessions. A third party, few in numbers but resolute in purpose, contended, that the only safe course was that of an armed neutrality; that the forces of the state should be instantly raised to fifty thousand men, and either of the belligerent powers which should violate their territory be threatened with the whole vengeance of the Republic.¹

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¹ Bot. i. 403,
405, 408,
409. Th.
viii. 276,
279.

Had the Venetians possessed the firmness of the Roman senate, they would have adopted the first course; had they been inspired by the spirit of the Athenian democracy, they would have followed the second; had they been animated by the courage of the Swiss confederacy, they might have taken the third. In any case the Republic would probably have been saved; for it is impossible to consider the long and equal struggle which ensued round Mantua, between France and Austria, without being convinced that a considerable body, even of Italian troops, might then have turned the balance. The Venetian government possessed a country inhabited by three millions of souls; the capital was beyond the reach of attack; their army could easily be raised to fifty thousand men; thirteen regiments of Sclavonians in their service were good troops; their fleet ruled the Adriatic. But Venice was worn out and corrupted; its nobles, drowned in pleasure, were destitute of energy; its peasantry, accustomed to peace, were unequal to war; its defence, intrusted wholly to mercenary troops, rested on a tottering foundation. They adopted in consequence the most timid course, which, in presence of danger, is generally the most perilous. They made no warlike preparations; they added neither to their army nor navy; they laid in no stores of provisions, but merely sent commissioners to the French general to deprecate his hostility, and endeavour to secure his good-will.² The consequence was what might have been anticipated from conduct so unworthy of the ancient

89.
They merely
deprecate
the hostility
of France.² Bot. i. 408,
413. Nap.
iii. 204, 205,
Th. viii. 278,
280. Hard.
iii. 357.

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fame of Venice. The commissioners were disregarded ; the war was carried on in the Venetian territories, and at its close the republic was swept from among the nations.

90.
Perfidy of
Napoleon
towards the
Venetian
commis-
sioners.

In adopting this course, Napoleon exceeded the instructions of his government ; and, indeed, on him alone appears to rest the atrocious perfidy and dissimulation exercised in the sequel towards that state. The directions of the Directory were as follows :—" Venice should be treated as a *neutral*, but not a friendly power ; it has done nothing to merit the latter character." But, instead of following these directions, Napoleon from the first used the most insulting and rigorous language to the Venetian commissioners. " Venice," said he, " by daring to give an asylum to the Count de Lille, a pretender to the throne of France, has declared war against the Republic. I know not why I should not reduce Verona to ashes—a town which had the presumption to esteem itself the capital of France." He declared to them that he would carry that threat into execution that very night, if an immediate surrender did not take place. The perfidy of his views against the Republic of St Mark, even at this early period, was fully evinced in his secret despatch to the Directory on 7th June. " If your object," said he, " is to extract five or six millions out of Venice, I have secured for you a pretence for a rupture. You may demand it as an indemnity for the combat of Borghetto, which I was obliged to sustain to take Peschiera. If you have *more decided views, we must take care not to let that subject of quarrel drop* : tell me what you wish, and be assured I will seize the most fitting opportunity of carrying it into execution, according to circumstances ; for we must take care not to have all the world on our hands at once. The truth of the affair of Peschiera is, that the Venetians were cruelly deceived by the Austrians, who demanded a passage for fifty men, and then seized the town."¹

¹ Corresp.
Secrète de
Nap. 7th
May, i. 232.
Hard. iii.
361.

Massena entered the magnificent city of Verona, the

frontier city of the Venetian dominions, situated on the Adige, and a military position of the highest importance for future operations, in the beginning of June. Its position at the entrance of the great valley of the Adige, and on the high-road from the Tyrol into Lombardy, rendered it the advanced post of the French army, in covering the siege of Mantua. He occupied, at the same time, Porto-Legnago, a fortified town on the Adige, which, along with Verona, strengthened that stream, whose short and rapid course from the Alps to the Po formed the best military frontier of Italy. There he received the commissioners of Venice, who vainly came to deprecate the victor's wrath, and induce him to retire from the territories of the republic. With such terror did his menaces inspire them, that the Venetian government concluded a treaty, by which they agreed to furnish supplies of every sort for the army, and secretly pay for them; and the commissioners, overawed by the commanding air and stern menaces of Napoleon, wrote to the senate—"This young man will one day have an important influence on the destinies of his country."¹

The French general was now firmly established on the line of the Adige, the possession of which he always deemed of so much importance, and to the neglect of which he ascribed all the disasters of the succeeding campaigns of the French in Italy. Nothing remained but to make himself master of Mantua; and the immense efforts made by both parties to gain or keep possession of that place prove the vast importance of fortresses in modern war. Placed in the middle of unhealthy marshes, which are traversed only by five chaussées, strong in its situation, as well as from the fortifications which surround it, this town is truly the bulwark of Austria and Italy, without the possession of which the conquest of Lombardy must be deemed insecure, and that of the Hereditary States cannot be attempted. The entrances of two only of the chaussées, which approached it, were defended by fortifications at that time;

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91.

Massena
enters Ve-
rona, and
Napoleon
is establish-
ed on the
Adige.

June 3.

June 4.

1 Th. viii.

283, 289.

Hard. iii.

364. Nap.

iii. 205.

92.

Descrip-
tion and
blockade
of Mantua.

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1796.

14th June.

so that by placing troops at these points, and drawing a cordon round the others, it was an easy matter to blockade the place, even with a body of troops inferior to those besieged. Serrurier sat down before this fortress, in the middle of June, with ten thousand men ; and with this inconsiderable force, skilfully disposed at the entrance of the highways which crossed the lake, and round its shores, he contrived to keep in check a garrison of fourteen thousand soldiers, of whom, it is true, more than a third encumbered the hospitals of the place. As the siege of this important fortress required a considerable time, Napoleon had leisure to deliberate concerning the ulterior measures which he should pursue. An army of forty-five thousand men, which had so rapidly overrun the north of Italy, could not venture to penetrate into Germany by the Tyrol—the mountains of which were occupied by Beaulieu's forces, aided by a warlike peasantry—and at the same time carry on the blockade of Mantua, for which at least fifteen thousand men would be required. Moreover, the southern powers of Italy were not yet subdued ; and, though little formidable in a military point of view, they might prove highly dangerous to the blockading force, if the bulk of the Republican troops were engaged in the defiles of the Tyrol, while the French armies on the Rhine were not yet in a condition to give them any assistance. Influenced by these considerations, he resolved to take advantage of the pause in military operations which the blockade of Mantua and retreat of Beaulieu afforded, to clear his rear of enemies, and establish the French influence to the south of the Apennines.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
158, 209.
Jom. viii.
146. Th.
viii. 290.

The King of Naples, alarmed at the retreat of the German troops, and fearful of having the whole forces of the Republic upon his own hands, upon the first appearance of their advance to the south, solicited an armistice, which the French commander readily granted. This was immediately followed by the secession of the Neapolitan

cavalry, two thousand four hundred strong, from the Imperial army. Encouraged by this defection, Napoleon resolved instantly to proceed against the Ecclesiastical and Tuscan states, in order to extinguish the hostility, which was daily becoming more inveterate, to the south of the Apennines. The excitement was extreme in all the cities of Lombardy ; and every hour rendered more marked the separation between the aristocratic and democratic parties. The ardent spirits in Milan, Bologna, Brescia, Parma, and all the great towns of that fertile district, were in full revolutionary action, and a large proportion of their citizens seemed resolved to throw off the patrician influence under which they had so long continued, and establish republics on the model of the great Transalpine democracy. Wakened by these appearances to a sense of the danger which threatened them, the aristocratic party were every where strengthening themselves ; the nobles in the Genoese fiefs were collecting forces ; the British had made themselves masters of Leghorn ; and the Roman pontiff was threatening to put forth his feeble strength. Napoleon knew that Wurmser, who had been detached from the army of the Upper Rhine with thirty thousand men, to restore affairs in Italy, could not be at Verona before the middle of July, and before then there appeared time to subdue the states of central Italy, and secure the rear of his army.¹

Having left fifteen thousand men before Mantua, and twenty thousand on the Adige, to cover its blockade, the French general set out himself, with the division of Augereau, to cross the Apennines. He returned, in the first instance, to Milan, opened the trenches before its castle, and pressed the siege so as to compel its surrender, which took place shortly after. From thence he proceeded against the Genoese fiefs. Lannes, with twelve hundred men, stormed Arquata, the chief seat of hostilities ; burned the village ; shot the principal inhabitants ; and by these severe measures so intimidated the senate

CHAP.
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93.

Napoleon resolves to proceed against Florence and Rome before the Austrian succours arrive.
5th June.

¹ Nap. iii.
213. Bot.
i. 414, 420.
Th. viii.
293, 294.

94.
Castle of Milan taken.
Genoese fiefs subdued. Napoleon enters Modena and Bologna.
June 9.

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of Genoa, that they implicitly submitted to the conqueror, sent off the Austrian minister, and agreed to the occupation of all the military posts in their territory by the French troops. From thence Napoleon moved towards the eastward, designing to cross the Apennines between Bologna and Florence. He entered Modena, where he was received with every demonstration of joy ; and, on the road to Bologna, made himself master of the fort of Urbino, with sixty pieces of heavy artillery, which proved a most seasonable supply for the siege of Mantua. His appearance at Bologna, which has always been distinguished beyond any other city in Italy by liberal opinions, was the signal for a general outbreak. The people at once revolted against the Papal authority ; while Napoleon encouraged the propagation of every principle which was calculated to dismember the Ecclesiastical territories. The Italian troops were pursued to Ferrara, which the Republicans entered without opposition, and made themselves masters of its arsenal, containing one hundred and fourteen pieces of artillery ; while General Vaubois crossed the Apennines, and, avoiding Florence, directed his steps towards Rome.¹

At the intelligence of his approach, the Council of the Vatican was thrown into the utmost alarm. Azara, minister of Spain, was despatched immediately with offers of submission, and arrived at Bologna to lay the tiara at the feet of the Republican general. The terms of an armistice were soon agreed on ; — It was stipulated that Bologna and Ferrara should remain in the possession of the French troops ; that the Pope should pay twenty millions of francs, furnish great contributions of stores and provisions, and give up a hundred of the finest works of art to the French commissioners. In virtue of this humiliating treaty, all the chief monuments of genius which adorned the Eternal City, were soon after transported to the museum at Paris. Genoa at the same time occupied the rapacious eyes of the French general:

June 19.
1 Jom. viii.
151, 152.
Bot. i. 416.
Th. viii. 298.
299. Nap.
iii. 214.

95.
Submission
of the Pope,
and mea-
sures against
Genoa.
24th June.

he had received instructions from the Directory to extract from its government ten millions of francs. "You may dictate laws to Genoa as soon as you please," were his expressions, in his instructions to Faypoult, the French envoy there. And to the Directory he wrote, — "All our affairs in Italy are now closed, excepting Venice and Genoa. *As to Venice, the moment for action has not yet arrived*; we must first beat Wurmser and take Mantua. But the moment has arrived for Genoa; I am about to break ground for the ten millions. I think, besides, with the minister Faypoult, that we must expel a dozen families from the government of that city, and oblige the senate to repeal a decree which banished two families favourable to France." And to Faypoult Napoleon prescribed his course of perfidious dissimulation in these words: "I have not yet seen M. Catanio, the Genoese deputy; but *I shall neglect nothing which may throw them off their guard*. The Directory has ordered me to exact the ten millions, but interdicted all political operations. *Omit nothing which may set the senate asleep*, and amuse them with hopes till the moment of wakening has arrived." The moment of wakening, thus contemplated by Napoleon, was an internal revolution, which was not yet fully prepared.¹

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14th July.

¹ Confident.
Despatch,
14th July.
Corresp.
Conf. i. 330,
334. Nap.
iii. 219.

Having arranged this important treaty, Napoleon without delay crossed the Apennines, and found the division of Vanbois at Pistoia. From that point he detached Murat, who suddenly descended upon Leghorn, and seized a large portion of the effects of the British merchants, which were sold in open violation of all the usages of war, which hitherto had respected private property at land; and from their sale he realised twelve millions of francs for the use of the army. What rendered this outrage more flagrant was, that it was committed in the territories of a neutral power, the Grand-duke of Tuscany, from whom he himself at the time was receiving the most splendid entertainment at Florence. Thus

96.
Violation of
the neutral
territory of
Tuscany,
and seizure
of Leghorn.
26th June.

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¹ Th. viii.
301. Bot. i.
436. Nap.
iii. 222.

97.

Massacre of
the peasants
at Lugo.

early did Napoleon evince that unconquerable hatred of British commerce, and that determination to violate the usages of war for its destruction, by which he was ever afterwards so strongly actuated, and which had so powerful a share in contributing to his downfall.¹

The rapine and pillage of the French authorities, consequent on this irruption into Tuscany, knew no bounds. "If our administrative conduct," said Napoleon to the Directory, "was detestable at Leghorn, our political conduct towards Tuscany has been no better." His views extended even further, for on the 25th he wrote to the Directory — "Reports are in circulation that the Emperor is dying; the Grand-duke of Tuscany, the heir to the throne, will instantly set out for Vienna. We must anticipate him, by taking military possession of the whole of Tuscany." After a short stay at Florence, Napoleon returned to Bologna, where Augereau took a severe vengeance on the inhabitants of the village of Lugo, who had taken up arms against the Republicans, and killed and wounded some soldiers in a detachment sent for its reduction. The village was carried by assault, burnt to ashes, and the unfortunate peasants, to the number of one thousand, were put to the sword with merciless severity. This terrible example having struck consternation into all the inhabitants of that part of Italy, Napoleon returned to the vicinity of Mantua, with the battering-train taken at the castles of Milan, Urbino, and Ferrara, to superintend the operations of the siege, which Serrurier was now about to undertake in good earnest, but for the relief of which place Austria was making the most vigorous exertions.²

98.

Napoleon's
secret mea-
sures to
bring on a
rupture with
Venice.

The resolution of Napoleon to stir up a quarrel with Venice was more and more clearly evinced, as matters approached a crisis in the north of Italy. On the 25th July he had a long and confidential conversation with Pesaro, the commissioner of that republic; and such was the vehemence of his language, the exaggeration of his complaints, and the sternness of his manner, that that

² Secret
Desp. 11th
and 25th
July.
Corresp.
Conf. vol. i.
Bot. i. 420.
Nap. iii. 225.

commissioner forthwith wrote to the senate of St Mark that war appeared inevitable. It was in vain that Pesaro represented to Napoleon "that, ever since the entrance of the French into Italy, his government had made it their study to anticipate all the wishes of the general-in-chief; that, if it had not done more, it was solely from inability, and a desire not to embroil itself with the Imperialists, who never ceased to reproach them with their partiality to France; that the Senate would do every thing in its power to restrain the public effervescence; and that the armaments, so much complained of, were directed as much against the English and Russians as the French."¹ The

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determination of Napoleon in regard to the Venetian republic is revealed in his secret despatches at this period to the Directory: "I have seized," said he, "the citadel of Verona, armed it with the Venetian cannon, and summoned the senate to dissolve its armaments.

¹ Letter of
Lallemand
to Napoleon,
26th July.
Corresp.
Confid. de
Nap. Hard.
iii. 424.

Venice has already furnished three millions for the service of the army; but, in order to extract more out of it, I have found myself under the necessity of assuming a menacing tone towards their commissaries, of exaggerating the assassinations committed on our troops, of complaining bitterly of their armaments; and by these means I compel them, in order to appease my wrath, to furnish whatever I desire. This is the only way to deal with such persons. There is not, on the face of the earth, a more perfidious or cowardly government. I will force them to provide supplies for the army till the fall of Mantua, and then announce that they must further make good the contributions fixed in your instructions."²

² Secret
Despatch of
Napoleon,
July 22.
Corresp. i.
327.

No sooner had the Aulic Council* received intelligence of the defeat of Beaulieu, and the retreat of his forces into the Tyrol, than they resolved upon the most energetic measures to repair the disaster. The army of Beaulieu retired to Roveredo, where they threw up intrenchments

99.
Efforts of
the Aus-
trians for
the relief of
Mantua.

* The "*Aulic Council*," so often mentioned in the course of this work, is a council of high officers at Vienna, to whom is intrusted the direction of the military concerns of the Empire.

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to cover their position, while eight thousand Tyrolese occupied the crests of the mountains, which separated the valley of the Adige from the lake of Garda. Meanwhile Marshal Wurmser was detached from the Upper Rhine with thirty thousand men, to assume the chief command of the army destined for the relief of Mantua ; which, by that great reinforcement, and numerous detachments drawn from the interior, was raised to sixty thousand effective troops. These extensive preparations, which were magnified by report, and had roused the aristocratic party throughout Italy to great exertions, filled Napoleon with the most lively apprehensions. To oppose them he had only fifty-five thousand men, of whom fifteen thousand were engaged in the siege of Mantua, and ten thousand in keeping up his communications and maintaining garrisons in the conquered territory ; so that not above thirty thousand could be relied on for operations in the field. He had incessantly urged the Directory to send him reinforcements ; but, although eight thousand men from the army of Kellermann had joined his standard, and numerous reinforcements from the depots in the interior, they were barely adequate to repair the losses arising from that wasteful campaign. Nothing but the greatest ability on the part of the general, and courage among the soldiers, could have compensated for this inferiority in numbers ; but the genius of Napoleon, and the confidence arising from a series of victories, proved adequate to the task.

¹ Jom. viii.
302, 303.
Nap. iii. 281,
232. Th.
viii. 360.

His success was mainly owing to the vicious plan of attack adopted by the Austrians, which, like all the others framed by the Aulic Council, was exposed to defeat from the division of their forces.¹

100.
Description
of the the-
atre of war.

The waters which descend from the southern ridges of the Tyrol unite into two streams, flowing nearly parallel to each other, and issuing, in the same latitude, into the plain of Lombardy—the Mincio and the Adige. The first forms, in its course, the noble sheet of water called the lake of Garda, flows through the plain immortalised by

the genius of Virgil, swells into the lakes which surround Mantua, and afterwards discharges itself into the Po. The latter, after descending from the snowy ridges of the Higher Alps, flows in an open valley to a narrow and precipitous pass above Verona, next emerges into the open country, winds in a deep and rocky bed to Legnago, after which it spreads into vast marshes, and is lost amidst the dikes and irrigated fields of Lombardy. Three roads present themselves to an army proposing to issue from the Tyrol into the Italian plains:—The first, turning sharp to the left at Roveredo, traverses the romantic defiles of the Val Sugana, and emerges into the open country at Bassano. The second passes by the upper end of the lake of Garda, and comes down by its western shore to Salo and Brescia; while the third descends the left bank of the Adige, and, after traversing the gloomy passes of Calliano and Chiusa, reaches the smiling plains of Italy, a few miles above the town of Verona. The space between the Adige and the lake of Garda, though only three leagues broad, is occupied by the Monte Baldo, the precipices of which restrain the river on the one hand and the lake on the other. In this narrow and rocky space a road descends between the Adige and the lake, from Roveredo to the plain. It follows the right bank of the stream as far as Osteria della Dugana, when, meeting impracticable precipices, it turns to the right, and ascends the plateau of Rivoli.¹

¹ Th. viii.
362, 364.
Jom. viii.
305. Personal observation.

The outlets of all these passes were occupied by the French troops. Sauret, with only four thousand five hundred men, was posted at Salo, to guard the western side of the lake of Garda, as the road there was not passable by artillery. Massena, with fifteen thousand, guarded the great road along the Adige, and occupied the plateau of Rivoli; while Despinoy, with five thousand, was in the environs of Verona; and Augereau, with eight thousand, in reserve at Legnago. Napoleon himself, with two thousand horse, took post at Castel-

101.
Positions of the French, and Austrian plan of attack.

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novo, in order to be equally near any of the points that might be menaced. Wurmser's plan was to make demonstrations only against Verona and the left of the Adige ; and to bring down the bulk of his forces by the Monte Baldo and the valley of Salo, on the opposite sides of the lake of Garda. For this purpose he detached Quasdanovich, with twenty thousand men, to go round the upper end of the lake, and descend upon Salo, while he took the command of forty thousand himself, whom he distributed on the two roads which descend the opposite banks of the Adige ; the one division was destined to force Corona and the plateau of Rivoli, while the other was to debouche upon Verona. The whole columns were in motion by the end of July ; rumour had magnified their numbers ; and the partisans of Austria and of the aristocratic system were already breaking out into exultation, and anticipating the speedy verification of the proverb—"That Italy was the tomb of the French."¹

¹ Jom. viii.
312. Nap.
iii. 233, 235.
Th. viii. 4.

102.
And great
success in
the outset.
July 29.

In truth, the circumstances of the Republicans were all but desperate. Their enemies were fresh, recruited in numbers, and superior in strength ; they were worn out with fatigue, dejected, and numerically inferior. On the 29th July, the Imperial outposts attacked the French at all points, and every where with success. Massena, vigorously assaulted at three in the morning by superior forces, was driven from the intrenchments of Corona, and retired with loss to Rivoli, from whence he was glad to escape towards Castelnovo, upon finding that the column which followed the left bank of the Adige was getting into his rear. At the same time the Imperialists drove in the Republican posts on the great road, forced the pass of Chiusa, and appeared before Verona ; while, on the other side of the lake of Garda, Quasdanovich attacked and carried the town of Salo, and afterwards Brescia, on the principal line of retreat towards France. In this extremity, Napoleon called a council of war.² All the officers, with the exception of Augereau, recommended a retreat behind the

² Th. viii.
364, 367.
Jom. viii.
312, 313.
Nap. iii.
233.

Po ; but that intrepid chief resolutely held out for battle. The generals were dismissed without the commander-in-chief having signified his own opinion, but in the course of the night he formed a resolution which not only extricated him from his perilous situation, but has immortalised his name in the annals of war.

The Austrians, sixty thousand strong, were descending the opposite sides of the lake of Garda, and it was evident that, if they succeeded in enclosing the French army near Mantua, they would infallibly crush it by their superiority of force. But in so doing they exposed themselves to be attacked and beaten in detail by forces inferior on the whole, but superior at the point of attack, if the siege of that place were rapidly raised, and the bulk of the French army thrown first on the one advancing column and then on the other. Napoleon resolved on this sacrifice. It involved a deep mortification, a very serious loss ; but without it there was not a chance of Italy being saved. Orders were immediately despatched to Serrurier to raise the siege of Mantua ; the division of Augereau was moved from Legnago across the Mincio ; and the French army, with the exception of Massena's division, concentrated at the lower extremity of the lake of Garda, to fall, in the first instance, upon the corps of Quasdanovich, which already intercepted his communications with Milan. These orders were promptly obeyed. During the night of the 31st July, the siege of Mantua was raised, the cannon spiked, and the stores thrown into the lake ; while Napoleon himself, with the greater part of his army, crossed the Mincio at Peschiera, and prepared to fall on the Austrian forces on the western shore of the lake of Garda. There was not a moment to lose ; in a few hours the Allied columns would be in communication, and the French compelled to fight greatly superior forces in a single field. No sooner had Napoleon arrived with the reinforcements, than he sent forward Augereau to clear the road to Milan, and ordered Sauret to retake Salo.¹

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103.
Extreme
peril of
Napoleon.
He raises
the siege of
Mantua.

31st July.

¹ Jom. viii.
316. Nap.
iii. 238, 239.
Th. viii. 362,
369. Hard.
iii. 430.

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104.

Napoleon
resumes the
offensive,
and arrests
Quasdanovich.

August 1.

Both expeditions were completely successful: Brescia was regained, and the Austrians were expelled from Salo. Meanwhile Napoleon himself, with the brigade of d'Allemagne, advanced to Lonato, and, after a violent struggle, drove the Imperialists out of that place, with the loss of five hundred prisoners. In these actions Quasdanovich lost few men; but he met with unlooked-for resistance; and vacillation appeared in his movements. He first gave orders to halt, and then, astonished at finding himself assailed by imposing masses, in a quarter where he expected to find only the rear of the enemy, he fell back towards the mountains, to await intelligence of the operations of the main body under Wurmser. Meanwhile that brave commander, having dislodged Massena from his position, advanced to Mantua, into which fortress he made his triumphal entry on the 1st August. The sudden raising of the siege, the abandonment of the equipage, the destruction of works which it had cost the Republicans so long to construct, all conspired to increase his satisfaction at this event, and promised an easy conquest over the retiring remains of the enemy. But, on the very night of his arrival, he received intelligence of the check of Quasdanovich and the recapture of Brescia. Immediately he advanced his columns across the Mincio, and moved upon Castiglione, with the design of enveloping the French army with all his forces, while Quasdanovich resumed the offensive, and retook the town of Salo. The crisis was now approaching: the Austrian armies were not only in communication, but almost united, while the Republicans, with inferior forces, lay between them. Napoleon immediately drew back the divisions of Massena and Augereau, above twenty thousand strong, and caused his whole army to face about: what had been the rear became the advanced guard. He put forth more than his wonted activity and rapidity of movement. Incessantly on horseback himself, he caused the soldiers, who had marched all night, to fight all day.¹ Having, by

¹ Nap. iii.
241. Th.
viii. 371,
372. Jom.
viii. 381.
Hard. iii.
432, 433.

this rapid countermarch, accumulated the bulk of his forces opposite to Wurmser, he resolved to deliver himself from that formidable adversary by an immediate attack. It was full time : the Austrians had discovered a passage over the Mincio, and driven the French from Castiglione and Lonato, where they had already begun to intrench themselves.

On the 3d August Napoleon advanced, with twenty-five thousand men, upon LONATO, while Augereau moved towards CASTIGLIONE. The first attack of the Republicans upon the former town was unsuccessful ; their light troops were thrown into confusion ; and General Pigeon, with three pieces of artillery, captured by the enemy. Upon this, the French general put himself at the head of his soldiers, and formed the centre into one formidable mass ; while the Imperialists, who consisted of a strong column of Quasdanovich's corps, were extending themselves towards Salo, in the double view of enveloping the French, and opening a communication with their general, whose artillery was already heard in that direction. Napoleon immediately perceived the error of his adversary, and, like Wellington in after-days at Salamanca, made a desperate charge, with a column of infantry supported by cavalry, upon his centre, which, being weakened for the extension of the wings, speedily gave way. Lonato was retaken by assault, and the Austrian army cut asunder. One part of it effected its retreat under Bayalitch to the Mincio ; while the other, finding itself irrecoverably separated from the main body, moved towards Salo, in the hope of effecting a junction with Quasdanovich. But Gueux, with a division of French, already occupied that place ; and the fugitive Austrians, pressed between the dragoons of Junot, who assailed their rear, and the infantry at Salo, who stopped their advance, disbanded, and sustained a loss of three thousand prisoners, and twenty pieces of cannon.¹

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105.
Battle of
Lonato.
3d August.

¹ Nap. iii.
242. Jom.
viii. 320.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
244, 246.

While the Imperialists were experiencing these disas-

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106.

Glorious
efforts of
Augereau at
Castiglione.

ters at Lonato, Augereau, on the right, had maintained an obstinate engagement at Castiglione. There the Republicans were the assailants, and the object of the French general was to make himself master of Castiglione, the key to the position in that quarter. With this view he had detached General Robert, with a regiment of the line, to gain, by a long circuit, the rear of the enemy; while General Pelletier, with two battalions, turned their right, and Augereau himself, at the head of the main body of his forces, advanced direct against the Imperial position in the plain. The Austrians made a stout resistance; but, being at length compelled to give ground, they were thrown into confusion by the sudden apparition of Robert's two battalions, which sprang out of an ambuscade in their rear. Taking advantage of this disorder, Augereau pushed on to gain the bridge of Castiglione, an indispensable preliminary to the capture of the town of the same name. But the Austrians, under Liptay, having brought up their reserve, returned to the charge with the most determined resistance; and it was only by the most heroic efforts, in which Augereau exposed his person like a simple grenadier, that the bridge was at length carried, and the enemy driven back into the town, which the victors entered pell-mell with the vanquished. The Austrians at length retired towards Mantua, entirely evacuating the town, after having sustained a loss of two thousand men; and, before they had proceeded far, they met the reinforcements which Wurmser was bringing up to their support. This desperate strife first drew Napoleon's notice to the determined character of Augereau, whose title was afterwards taken from it; and he frequently reminded him in later days, when wishing to rouse him to extraordinary efforts, "*De ses beaux jours de Castiglione.*"¹ *

¹ Vict. et
Conq. vi.
246, 249.
Jom. viii.
320. Nap.
iii. 242.

As it was evident that the Austrian veteran was still disposed to contend for the empire of Italy in a pitched

* "*Of his glorious days at Castiglione.*"

battle, Napoleon deemed it indispensable to clear his rear of Quasdanovich before engaging in it. On the following day he employed himself in collecting and organising his forces at Lonato, with a view to the decisive conflict; while, by moving two divisions against Quasdanovich, whose troops were now exhausted by fatigue, he compelled him to remount the Val Sabbia towards Riva. A singular event at this time took place, highly characteristic both of the extraordinarily intersected situation of the two armies, and of the presence of mind and good fortune of Napoleon. He had arrived at Lonato to expedite the movement of his forces in the opposite directions where their enemies were to be found; and, from the dispersion which he had ordered, only twelve hundred men remained at headquarters. Before he had been long there, he was summoned to surrender by a corps of four thousand Austrians, who had already occupied all the avenues by which retreat was possible. They consisted of a part of the troops of Bayalitch, which, having been defeated in its attempts to effect a junction with Quasdanovich, was now, in desperation, endeavouring to regain the remainder of the army on the Mincio. Napoleon made his numerous staff mount on horseback; and, having ordered the officer bearing the flag of truce to be brought before him, directed the bandage to be taken from his eyes, and immediately told the astonished Austrian, that he was in the middle of the French army, in presence of its general-in-chief, and that, unless they laid down their arms in ten minutes, he would put them all to the sword. The officer, deceived by the splendid *cortège* by which he was surrounded, returned to his division, and recommended a surrender; and the troops, cut off from their companions, and exhausted by fatigue and disaster, laid down their arms.¹ When they entered the town, they had the mortification of discovering not only that they had capitulated to a third of their numbers, but had missed an opportunity of making prisoner the

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107.

Surrender of
4000 Aus-
trians to
Napoleon's
staff and
1200 men.

¹ Nap. iii.
243, 245.
Th. viii.
375. Jom.
viii. 326,
327. Bot.i.
453. Vict.
et Conq. vi.
250, 251.

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conqueror who had already filled the world with his renown.

1796.

108.

Both parties
prepare for
a decisive
battle.

On the following day both parties prepared for a decisive engagement. The Imperialists under Wurmser were twenty-five thousand strong, the corps of Quasdanovich, and that which blockaded Peschiera, being detached, and unable to take any part in the battle; the French about twenty-three thousand. Both parties were drawn up in the plain at right angles to the mountains, on which each rested a wing; the French right was uncovered, while the Imperialists' left was supported by the mill of Medola. Augereau commanded the centre, Massena the left, Verdier the right; but the principal hopes of Napoleon were rested on the division of Serrurier, from Mantua, which had orders to march all night, and fall, when the action was fully engaged, on the rear of the enemy. The soldiers on both sides were exhausted with fatigue, but all felt that on the result of this contest depended the fate of Italy.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
328. Th.
viii. 378.
379. Vict.
et Cong. vi.
252, 255.

109.
Battle of
Medola.
5th Aug.

Wurmser fell into the same error as Bayalitch had done in the preceding engagement—that of extending his right along the heights, in order to open a communication with Quasdanovich, who was within hearing of his artillery. To favour this movement, Napoleon drew back his own, while at the same time he accumulated his forces against the Austrians' left; Marmont with a powerful battery of heavy artillery, thundered against the post of Medola, which Verdier, with three battalions of grenadiers, speedily carried. At the same time General Fiorilla, who commanded the division of Serrurier, drawn off from Mantua, came up in rear of the Austrians, and completed their confusion by a vigorous attack, which had wellnigh carried off Wurmser himself. Seeing the decisive moment arrived, Napoleon ordered a general charge by all his forces; and the Austrians, pressed in front by Augereau and Massena, threatened in rear by Fiorilla, and turned on their left by Verdier, fell back at all points. The excessive fatigue of the Republican

troops prevented their pursuing the broken enemy far, who fell back behind the Mincio, with the loss of two thousand killed and wounded, one thousand prisoners, and twenty pieces of cannon. This action, the importance of which is not to be estimated by the number of troops engaged, was decisive of the fate of Italy. With a view to prevent Wurmser from reassembling his scattered forces, Napoleon, on the following day, sent Massena to raise the siege of Peschiera, and, after an obstinate engagement, he succeeded in routing the Austrian division before that place, with the loss of ten pieces of cannon and five hundred prisoners. In this action, a young colonel particularly distinguished himself, named SUCHET, afterwards Duke of Albufera. At the same time Napoleon advanced to Verona, which the Austrians abandoned on his approach; and Massena, after some sharp skirmishing, resumed his old positions at Rivoli and the Monte Baldo: while Wurmser, having revictualled Mantua, and raised its garrison to fifteen thousand men, composed chiefly of fresh troops, resumed his former station at Roveredo, and in the fastnesses of the Tyrol.¹

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Aug. 6.

Aug.
1 Nap. iii.
246, 248.
Jom. viii.
331, 335.
Th. viii.
379.

By this expedition Wurmser had relieved Mantua, and supplied it with a garrison of fresh troops; but he had lost nearly twenty thousand men, and sixty pieces of cannon; and the spirit of his soldiers was, by fatigue, defeat, and disaster, completely broken. The great successes which attended the French arms are mainly to be ascribed to the extraordinary vigour, activity, and talent displayed by their general-in-chief. The Austrian plan of attack was founded on an undue confidence in their own powers. They thought the main body under Wurmser would be able to defeat the French army, and raise the siege of Mantua, while the detachment under Quasdanovich would cut off their retreat. It must be admitted, in favour of this plan, that it was on the point of being attended with complete success, and, against a general and troops of less resolution, unquestionably would have

110.
Result of
these ac-
tions, and
causes of
the French
success.

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been so. When opposed, however, to the vigour and activity of Napoleon, it offered the fairest opportunity for decisive defeat. The two corps of the Imperialists could communicate only by Roveredo and the upper end of the lake of Garda, a circuit of above sixty miles ; while the French, occupying a central station between them, at its southern extremity, were enabled, though on the whole inferior, by a great exertion of activity, to bring a superior force, first against the one, and then against the other. Their successes, however, were dearly purchased : above seven thousand men had been killed and wounded ; Wurmser carried with him three thousand prisoners into the Tyrol ; and the whole siege equipage of Mantua had fallen into the hands of the enemy, or been lost.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
248, 250.
Th. viii.
381.

111.
Blockade of
Mantua
resumed.
Formation
of the Polish
Legion.

The democratic party in all the Italian towns were thrown into transports at this success : and the rejoicings among them at Milan, Bologna, and Modena, were proportioned to the terror with which they had formerly been inspired. But Napoleon, judging more accurately of his position, and seeing the siege of Mantua was to be commenced anew, while Wurmser, with forty thousand men, was still on the watch in the Tyrol, deemed prudence and precaution more than ever necessary. He did not attempt, therefore, to collect a second battering-train for the siege of that fortress, but contented himself with a simple blockade, in maintaining which during the autumnal months, his troops became extremely sickly, from the pestilential atmosphere of its marshes. To the powers in the southern parts of the Peninsula who had, during the temporary success of the Austrians, given indication of hostile designs, he wrote in the most menacing strain. The King of Naples was threatened with an attack from seventy thousand French if he violated the armistice ; the Papal legate obtained pardon for a revolt at Ferrara only by the most abject submission ; the Venetians were informed that he was aware of their preparations, though he still kept up negotiations, and continued to live at

their expense ; while the King of Piedmont received commands to complete the destruction of the guerilla parties which infested the mountainous parts of his dominions. To the Milanese, on the other hand, who had remained faithful to France during its transient reverses, he wrote in the most flattering terms, and gave them leave to raise troops for their defence against the Imperial forces. The most ardent of the youth of Lombardy were speedily enrolled under the Republican banners ; but little was to be expected from these unwarlike recruits. A more efficient force was formed out of the Poles, who, since the last partition of their unhappy country, had wandered without a home through Europe, and now flocked in such numbers to Napoleon's standard, as to lay the foundation of the Polish legion, which afterwards became so renowned in the Imperial wars.¹

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¹ Nap. iii.
251, 253.
Th. viii.
382, 384.
Bot. i. 454.
Hard. iii.
346.

The troops on both sides remained in a state of repose for three weeks after this terrible struggle, during which Wurmser was assiduously employed in reorganising and recruiting his forces, while Napoleon received considerable reinforcements from the army of Kellermann and the interior of France. The numbers on both sides were, at the end of August, nearly equal ; Wurmser's army having been raised to nearly fifty thousand men, by additions from the Hereditary States, and Napoleon's to the same amount by the junction of Kellermann's forces.* Untaught by former disasters of the imprudence of forming plans at a distance for the regulation of their armies, the Aulic Council again framed and transmitted to Wurmser a plan for the expulsion of the French from the line of the Adige. According to this design, he was to leave twenty thousand men under Davidovich, to guard Roveredo and the valley of the Adige ; and to descend himself, with thirty thousand, by the gorges of the Brenta to Bassano, and so reach the plains of Padua.² Thus, notwithstanding their

112.
Wurmser
again ad-
vances, and
the French
issue forth
to meet
him.

² Th. viii.
393, 394.
Nap. iii. 256.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
268, 272.

* The sick and wounded in the French army at this period were no less than fifteen thousand.—*Confidential Despatch, 25th August.*—*Corresp. Conf.* i. 441.

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113.
Napoleon
resumes the
offensive.

former disasters, they were again about to commit the error of dividing their force into two columns, while Napoleon occupied a central position equidistant from each; with this difference, that, instead of a lake, they had now a mass of impassable mountains between them.

Napoleon at this time resolved to resume the offensive, in order to prevent any detachments from the Imperial army into Bavaria, where the Archduke Charles was now severely pressed by Moreau. The two armies broke up about the same time, without the generals on either side being aware of their opponent's measures—Wurmser descending the Brenta, and Napoleon ascending the Adige. Foreseeing the possibility of a descent upon Mantua during his absence, the French general left Kilmaine, with three thousand men, to occupy Legnago and Verona, while ten thousand still maintained the blockade of Mantua, and he himself, with thirty thousand, moved towards the Tyrol by the two roads on the banks of the Adige, and that on the western side of the lake of Garda. The French were the first to commence operations. Early in September, Vaubois, with the division of Sauret, ascended the lake, and, after several combats, reached Tortola, at its upper extremity. On the same day Napoleon, with the divisions of Massena and Augereau, arrived in front of the advanced posts of the Austrians at Serravalle, on the Adige, and on the following day attacked their position. The Imperialists stood firm; but Napoleon sent out a cloud of light troops on the heights on either side of their columns, and the moment they began to waver, he made so vigorous a charge along the chaussée with the hussars, that the Austrians were driven back in confusion, and the Republicans entered Roveredo pell-mell with the fugitives.¹

4th Sept.

¹ Th. viii.
394, 396.
Nap. iii. 259.
Bot. i. 460.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
274, 280.

114.
Defeat of
Davidovich
near Calli-
ano.

Davidovich rallied his broken divisions in the defile of Calliano, a formidable pass on the banks of the Adige, formed where the precipices of the Alps approach so close to the river that there is only the breadth of four

hundred toises left between them. An old castle, which the Austrians had strengthened and mounted with cannon, was placed at the edge of the precipice, and a ruined wall stretched across the gorge of the defile, from the foot of the rocks to the margin of the stream. Napoleon threw his light troops on the mountains upon his own right, placed a battery, which commanded the Austrian cannon, and, forming a close column of ten battalions, precipitated it along the high-road upon the enemy. Nothing could withstand the impetuosity of the attack. The Imperialists were routed; horse, foot, and cannon rushed in confusion through the narrow defile in their rear; and the Republican cavalry, charging furiously along the chaussée, drove them, in the utmost disorder, towards Trent. Seven hundred prisoners and fifteen pieces of cannon fell into the hands of the victors; and on the following day Napoleon entered that city, the capital of the Italian Tyrol, while the discomfited remains of Davidovich's corps retired farther up the valley of the Adige, behind the Lavis.¹

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5th Sept.
Nap. iii.
258, 260.
Th. viii.
397, 398.

The intelligence of this disaster, so far from stopping, only accelerated the march of Wurmser through the defiles of the Brenta. He now imagined that Napoleon intended to penetrate by Brixen and the Brenner into Germany, in order to co-operate with Moreau in the plains of Bavaria; and the Austrian veteran immediately conceived the bold design of hastening, with his whole disposable force, down the Val Sugana into the plain of Bassano, turning rapidly to the right, seizing upon Verona, and both raising the siege of Mantua and preventing the return of Napoleon into Italy. The French general, who, by treachery at the Austrian headquarters, was uniformly put in possession of his adversary's plans before they could be executed, immediately perceived the danger which would result from this measure on the part of the enemy, and resolved to oppose it by another, equally bold, on his own side. This was, to leave the division of

115.
Napoleon
advances
against
Wurmser.

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¹ Th. viii.
399. Nap.
iii. 262.
Hard. iii.
448.

Vaubois alone in the Tyrol to make head against Davidovich, and descend himself, with twenty-four thousand men, the defiles of the Brenta, and attack Wurmser before he had got round to Verona. In doing this, he ran the risk, it is true, of being himself shut up in the terrible defiles of the Val Sugana, surrounded by precipices and peaks of a stupendous elevation, between Wurmser in front and Davidovich in rear ; but he trusted to the resolution of his troops to overcome every obstacle, and hoped, by driving his antagonist back on the Adige, to compel his whole force to lay down their arms.¹

116.
Action near
Primolano,
in the Val
Sugana.

At break of day, on the 6th, the French troops were in motion, climbing the steep hills which shut in the valley of the Adige on the eastern side. From the plains of Trent they soon surmounted the ridge which forms its eastern boundary, and, descending the torrent of the Val Sugana, they reached Bocco di Val Sugana at night, after having advanced ten leagues. On the following morning they continued their march, and at the entrance of the narrow defile, there shut in by steep and inaccessible rocks, terminating in peaks of the most fantastic kind, came up with the Austrian rearguard, strongly posted near Primolano. Napoleon put in practice the same manœuvre which had succeeded so well at Calliano, covering the mountains on either side with his tirailleurs, and forming a close column of infantry to attack the position along the high-road. Nothing could resist the impetuosity of the French troops. The Austrians, who were greatly inferior in number, being only the rearguard of the main force, were routed with the loss of two thousand prisoners and nine pieces of cannon. The fugitives were pursued as far as Cesmona, where headquarters were established. Napoleon, in his eagerness to pursue the enemy, outrode all his suite, and passed the night alone, wrapped in his cloak, on the ground, in the midst of a regiment of infantry who bivouacked round the town.² A private soldier shared

² Bot. i. 464.
Nap. iii. 263,
264. Th.
vii. 400.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
76, 79.

with him his rations, and reminded him of it, after he became Emperor, in the camp at Boulogne.

On the same day in which this action took place in the gorges of the Val Sugana, the advanced guard of Wurmser, under Mezaros, had reached Verona, and was already skirmishing with the posts of the Republicans on the fortifications which had been erected round that city, when they were recalled to make head against the terrible enemy who had assailed their rear. Wurmser collected all his forces at Bassano, to endeavour to bar the passage, and throw the French back into the defiles. The heavy infantry and artillery were placed on a strong position in front of the town and round its mouldering towers, while six battalions of light troops occupied the opening of the valley into the plain. These were speedily overthrown, and the divisions of Massena and Augereau, emerging from the defiles, found themselves in presence of a brilliant force of twenty thousand men, with a powerful artillery, drawn up in battle-array. But the Austrians, discouraged by repeated defeats, made but a feeble resistance. Massena speedily routed them on the right, while Augereau broke them on the left: the fugitives rushed in confusion into the town, whither they were immediately followed by the victorious French, who made four thousand prisoners, and captured thirty pieces of cannon, besides almost all the baggage, pontoons, and ammunition of the army.¹

During the confusion of this defeat the Austrians got separated from each other; Quasdanovich, with three thousand men, was thrown back towards Friuli, while Wurmser, with sixteen thousand, took the road to Mantua. The situation of the veteran marshal was all but desperate: Massena was pressing his rear, while Porto Legnago and Verona were both in the hands of the enemy, and the loss of all his pontoons at Bassano rendered it impossible to pass the Adige but at one or other of these places. Fortunately for him, the battalion which occupied Porto Legnago

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117.

Wurmser
defeated
near Bas-
sano by
Massena.

† Th. viii.
401, 402.
Nap. iii.
265, 266.
Bot. i. 465.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
79, 80.

118.
He throws
himself into
Mantua.

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had been withdrawn to Verona during the attack on that place, and the one destined to replace it had not yet arrived. By a rapid march he reached that town before the Republicans, and thus got his troops across the Adige. Napoleon, following his prey with breathless anxiety, no sooner discovered that the Austrians had effected the passage at Legnago, than he pushed Massena across the river to Cerra, in order to cut them from the road to Mantua. But the Austrians fought with the courage of despair, and their cavalry, five thousand strong, who were unbroken, and whose spirit had not suffered by disaster, proved irresistible to their enemies. Napoleon himself, who had come up during the engagement, had great difficulty in saving himself by flight; and Wurmser, who arrived a few minutes after, deemed himself so secure of his antagonist, that he recommended to his dragoons to take him alive. Having missed so brilliant a stroke, the old marshal continued his march, passed the Molinella, cut to pieces a body of eight hundred infantry which endeavoured to interrupt his progress, and entered Mantua in a species of triumph which threw a ray of glory over his long series of disasters.¹

¹ Th. viii.
404. Nap.
iii. 270.
Bot. i. 465.
Hard. iii.
447, 449.
Vict. et
Cong. vii.
83, 84.

119.
Where he is
shut up by
the French.

Encouraged by these successes, he still endeavoured to keep the field with twenty thousand infantry and five thousand horse; and soon after his cuirassiers destroyed a regiment of light infantry at Due Castelle. But this was the termination of his transient gleam of prosperity. Napoleon soon after brought up the greater part of his forces, and Augereau stormed Porto Legnago, making prisoners a thousand men and fifteen pieces of cannon—a stroke which, by depriving Wurmser of the means of passing the Adige, threw him back on Mantua. On the 19th he was attacked by the division of Augereau, that of Serrurier, then commanded by Salinguet, and that of Massena, constituting in all an equal force. The Austrian cavalry at first drove back Augereau, and the battle seemed for a time doubtful; but a vigorous charge by Massena in the centre, in the course of which he carried Fort St George

at the point of the bayonet, restored affairs, and Wurmser was at length repulsed into Mantua, with the loss of three thousand men and twenty pieces of cannon. Two days afterwards, he threw a bridge over the Po, and attacked Governolo, one of the fortresses erected by the French at the termination of the dikes, with the design of cutting his way through to the Adige; but he was repulsed with the loss of six hundred men and four pieces of cannon; and, in the beginning of October, Kilmaine resumed his old lines round the town, and the Austrians were shut in on every side within its walls. Wurmser killed the horses of his numerous and splendid cavalry, salted their carcasses, and made every preparation for a vigorous defence: while Napoleon despatched his aide-de-camp, MARMONT,* afterwards Duke of Ragusa, with the standards taken in these glorious actions, to lay at the feet of the French government.¹

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¹ Nap. iii.
273. Bot.
i. 472, 473.
Th. viii.
405. Vic.
et Conq. vii.
82, 86.

By the result of these conflicts, the Austrian army in the field was reduced from fifty thousand to fifteen thousand men: of these, twelve thousand under Davidovich had taken refuge in the defiles leading to Mount Brenner, while three thousand under Quasdanovich were in the mountains of Friuli. Wurmser, it is true, had brought sixteen thousand into Mantua; but this force, accumulated in a besieged and unhealthy town, was of no real service during the remainder of the campaign, and rather, by

120.
Results of
these ac-
tions.

* Auguste Frederic de Marmont was born at Châtillon-sur-Seine on 20th July 1774. His father, who belonged to an old and respectable military family, had himself followed the profession of arms; and he destined his son, from his earliest years, to the same. At the early age of fifteen he received his commission as sub-lieutenant in a regiment of infantry; and was transferred, in January 1792, into one of artillery. He made his first essay in arms in the campaign of 1792, when he was attached to the army of the Alps. In 1793 he served at the siege of Toulon, and his skill in gunnery there first attracted the notice of Napoleon. He subsequently accompanied the future emperor to Paris, and shared in his disgrace after the 9th Thermidor. Having afterwards got employment with the army of the Rhine, he distinguished himself in various combats, in which he commanded, under Desaix, the artillery of the advanced guard. After the armistice in December 1795 had terminated active operations on the Rhine, he returned to Paris, where Napoleon had now risen into high favour with government, in consequence of the suppression of the revolt of the Sections; and from him he obtained the situation of aid-de-camp, which he held through

Early history
of Marmont.

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¹ Hard. iii.
450. Nap.
iii. 273.
Jom. ix. 126.
Th. iii. 406.
Vict. et
Conq. vi.
86, 88.

increasing the number of useless mouths within the place, accelerated the period of its ultimate surrender. Before the end of October, ten thousand of the garrison were in the hospitals; so that the besieged were unable either to make any use of their superfluous numbers, or get quit of the unserviceable persons who consumed their scanty provisions. But these successes, great as they were, had not been purchased without a very heavy loss to the French army, who, in these actions, were weakened by above fifteen thousand men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners.¹

121.
Vast efforts
on both sides
to recruit
their forces.

Both parties remained in inactivity for a considerable time after these exhausting efforts, during which the Austrians were energetically employed in repairing their losses, and the Republicans in drawing forces from the other side of the Alps. The latter took advantage of the delay to organise revolutionary powers throughout all the north of Italy. Bologna and Ferrara were united under a provisional government, republican forces and Jacobin clubs established, and all the machinery of democracy put in full operation; Modena was revolutionised, the old government replaced by a popular assembly, and French troops admitted within its walls; while legions of national guards were organised throughout the whole of Lombardy. But more efficient auxiliaries were approaching. Twelve battalions from the army of la Vendée, besides the remainder of the forces of Kellermann, joyfully crossed the Alps, happy all the Italian campaigns. Overflowing with courage, he was with the advanced guard of cavalry which crossed the river above Lodi, and had his horse shot under him on that occasion; notwithstanding which, he captured the first gun which was taken in that terrible combat, for which he received a sabre of honour. At the battle of Castiglione he also distinguished himself; and so brilliant were the services which he rendered during the actions at Mantua, that Napoleon selected him to bear the standards taken to the Directory at Paris.² He became marshal of France, and shared largely in the glories and dangers of Napoleon's campaigns. He was a most able general, and second to none of the Emperor's lieutenants in the movements of a campaign, though on the field of battle he had not the daring of Murat, or the cool determination of Davoust. Defeated at Salamanca by Wellington, he had afterwards the misfortune to be twice compelled to sign a capitulation of Paris. But his reputation has survived these rude shocks; and his Travels in the East prove, that to the eye of a general he united the accomplishments of a scholar and the heart of a philanthropist.

² Biographie
des Contem-
porains, xv.
1-3.

to exchange the scene of utter penury and inglorious warfare, to which their efforts had hitherto been confined, for the luxurious quarters and shining achievements of the Italian army. In the end of October, Alvinzi, who had assumed the command of the army in Friuli, had assembled forty thousand men under his standards; while the corps of Davidovich was raised, by the junction of a large body of the Tyrolese militia, a force admirably adapted for mountain warfare, to eighteen thousand men. To oppose this mass of assailants, Napoleon had twelve thousand men under Vaubois, on the Lavis, in front of Trent; twenty thousand on the Brenta and the Adige observing Alvinzi, and ten thousand guarding the lines round Mantua. The disproportion, therefore, was very great in every quarter; and Napoleon, justly alarmed at his situation, and chagrined at the Directory for not putting a larger force at his disposal, wrote to the government that he was about to lose the whole of his Italian conquests.^{1*}

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¹ Th. viii.
448, 449.
Jom. ix. 145,
158. Nap.
iii. 345, 346.
Nov. 1.

The Austrian preparations being completed, Alvinzi, on the 1st November, threw two bridges over the Piave, and advanced against Massena, whose headquarters were at Bassano. At the approach of the Imperialists in such superior force, the French fell back to Vicenza, and Napoleon hastened, with the division of Augereau and the reserve, to their support. On the 6th a general battle took place. Massena overthrew the Austrian left, commanded by Provera and Liptay, and drove them with loss over the Brenta; while Napoleon himself defeated the right, under Quasdanovich, and would have carried the town of Bas-

122.
Alvinzi
again ad-
vances.

Nov. 6.

* Napoleon's letter was in these terms:—"Mantua cannot be reduced before the middle of February; you will perceive from that how critical our situation is: and our political system is, if possible, still worse. Peace with Naples is indispensable; an alliance with Genoa and Turin necessary. Lose no time in taking the people of Lombardy, Modena, Bologna, and Ferrara, under your protection; and, above all, send reinforcements. The Emperor has thrice re-formed his army since the commencement of the campaign. Every thing is going wrong in Italy; the prestige of our forces is dissipated; the enemy now count our ranks. It is indispensable that you take into your instant consideration the critical situation of the Italian army, and forthwith secure it friends both among kings and people. The influence of Rome is

8th Oct.

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 1 Nap. iii.
 437. Th.
 viii. 543.
 Vict. et
 Conq. vii.
 186, 189.

123.
 Defeat of
 Vaubois by
 the Imperialists.
 Nov. 1.

² Nap. iii.
 348, 349.
 Th. viii.
 453, 455.
 Vict. et
 Conq. vii.
 185, 189.

124.
 Napoleon
 hastens in
 person to
 the plateau
 of Rivoli.

sano, which the Imperialists occupied in force, had not Hohenzollern, who advanced at the head of the Austrian reserve, made good the place till nightfall. But, early on the following morning, the French general received intelligence from Vaubois, in the Tyrol, which not only interrupted his career of success, but rendered an immediate retreat on the part of the whole Republican army unavoidable.¹

In obedience to the orders he had received, that general, on the same day on which the Austrians crossed the Piave, commenced an attack on their position on the Lavis; but he was not only received with the utmost intrepidity, but worsted in the encounter, and, his forces having fallen into confusion in the course of their retreat through the narrow valley, he was driven back in disorder through the town of Trent, to the defile of Calliano, with the loss of four thousand men. There he made a stand; but Davidovich, having caused a large part of his forces to cross to the right bank of the Adige, passed that post, and was moving rapidly down on the Monte Baldo and Rivoli, so as to threaten his communications with Verona and the remainder of the army. Nothing was left for Vaubois but to retire in haste towards Verona, which was seriously menaced by the advance of the Tyrolese army; while their progress on the Monte Baldo could only be arrested by bringing up Joubert in the utmost haste from the lines before Mantua.²

No sooner was this disastrous intelligence received by Napoleon, than he drew back his whole force through Vicenza to Verona; while Alvinzi, who was himself preparing to retire, after his check on the preceding day, immediately resumed the offensive. Napoleon in per-incalculable: you did wrong in breaking with that power; I would have temporised with it, as we have done with Venice and Genoa. Whenever the general in Italy is not the centre of negotiation as well as military operations, the greatest risks will be incurred. You may ascribe this language to ambition; but I am satiated with honours, and my health is so broken, that I must implore you to give me a successor. I can no longer sit on horseback: my courage alone is unshaken. *Every thing was ready for the explosion at Genoa; but Faypoult thought it expedient to delay. We must conciliate Genoa till the new order of things is more firmly established.*—*Confident.* Despatches, Oct. 8, 1796, ii. 92, 93.

son proceeded, with such troops as he could collect, in the utmost haste to the Monte Baldo, where he found the division of Vaubois all assembled on the plateau of Rivoli, and so much reinforced as to be able to withstand an attack. He here deemed it necessary to make a severe example of the regiments whose panic had so nearly proved fatal to the army. Collecting the troops into a circle, he addressed them, with a severe tone, in these words — "Soldiers, I am displeased with you. You have evinced neither discipline, nor valour, nor constancy. You have allowed yourselves to be chased from positions where a handful of resolute men might have arrested an army. Soldiers of the 39th and 85th, you are no longer French soldiers. Chief of the staff, cause it to be written on their standards, *They are no longer of the Army of Italy.*" These terrible words, pronounced with a menacing voice, filled these brave regiments with consternation. The laws of discipline could not restrain the sounds of grief which burst from their ranks. They broke their array, and, crowding round the general, entreated that he would lead them into action, and give them an opportunity of showing whether they were not of the army of Italy. Napoleon consoled them by some kind expressions, and, feigning to yield to their prayers, promised to suspend the order. A few days after, they behaved with uncommon gallantry, and regained their place in his esteem.¹

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Notwithstanding his check on the Brenta, the operations of Alvinzi had hitherto been crowned with the most brilliant success. He had regained possession of the whole of the Italian Tyrol, and of all the plain of Italy between that river and the Adige. But the most difficult part still remained, which was to pass the latter stream in the face of the enemy, and effect a junction with the right wing, under Davidovich, which had achieved such important advantages. He followed the retiring columns of the Republicans, who took a position on the heights of Cal-

¹ Nap. iii.
350. Th.
viii. 455.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
191-196.

125.
Returns to
Caldiero,
and is there
defeated.

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XX.

1796.

Nov. 11.

diero, determined to defend the road to Verona to the very uttermost. Napoleon arrived there from the Monte Baldo, on the evening of the 10th, and resolved to attack Alvinzi on the following day, who had occupied a strong position directly in front, his left resting on the marshes of Arcola, and his right on the heights of CALDIERO and the village of Colognola. Massena was directed to attack the right, which appeared the most accessible, and his advanced guard succeeded in ascending an eminence, surmounted by a mill, which the Austrian general had neglected to occupy ; but the Imperialists, returning in force, regained the post, and made the brigade prisoners. The action continued the remainder of the day along the whole line, without decisive success to either party ; but the rain, which fell in torrents, and the mud, which clogged the wheels, prevented the French artillery from being brought up to meet the fire of the Austrian cannon, which, in position, thundered with terrible effect upon the Republican columns. Wearied and dispirited, they drew back at night, yielding, for the first time in the campaign, the victory in a pitched battle to their enemies.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
353. Th.
viii. 457.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
194, 195.

126.
Perilous
situation of
Napoleon.

The situation of Napoleon was now, to all appearance, utterly desperate. He had been weakened by the loss of four thousand men under Vaubois, and three thousand in the recent actions with Alvinzi ; his troops, dispirited by these disasters, had lost much of their confidence and courage, and a depressing feeling of the great strength of the enemy had entered every breast. The army, it was true, had still the advantage of a central position at Verona, in the midst of their enemies ; but they could resume the offensive in no direction with any appearance of success. In the north they were arrested by the defiles of the Tyrol ; in the east by the position of Caldiero, known by recent experience to be impregnable ; in the south the blockading force was hardly able to make head against the frequent sorties of the garrison of Mantua. The peril of their situation was rapidly and fully perceived

by the French soldiers, more capable than any others in Europe of judging of the probable course of events, and extremely susceptible of strong impressions; and it required all the art of their general, aided by the eloquence of his lieutenants, to hinder them from sinking under their misfortunes. Napoleon wrote in the most desponding terms to the Directory, but in public he assumed the appearance of confidence; and the wounded in the rear, hearing of the peril of the army, began to issue, with their wounds yet unhealed, from the hospitals.^{1*}

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XX.
1796.

¹ Th. viii.
458, 460.
Nap. iii.
356, 357.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
195, 196.

But the genius of Napoleon did not desert him in this dilemma, and his fortitude was equal to the terrible crisis in which his affairs were placed. Without communicating his design to any one, he ordered the whole army to be under arms at nightfall on the 14th November, and they began their march in three columns, crossed the Adige, and took the road to Milan. The hour of departure, the route, the universal ignorance in regard to their destination, all inspired the belief that they were about to retreat, and relinquish to their rivals the plains of Italy. Breathless with anxiety, the troops defiled through the *western* gates of Verona; not a word was spoken in the ranks; grief filled every heart; in the dark columns, the measured tread of marching men alone was heard. Suddenly the order was given to turn

127.
His new
designs.

* The gloomy anticipations of Napoleon at this period are strongly depicted in the following interesting secret despatch to the Directory:—"If the events I have to recount are not propitious, you will not ascribe it to the army; its inferiority, and the exhaustion of its brave men, give me every reason to fear for it. Perhaps we are on the eve of losing Italy. None of the promised succours have arrived; they are all arrested at Lyons or Marseilles. The activity of our government at the commencement of the war can alone give you an idea of the energy of the court of Vienna; hardly a day elapses that they do not receive five thousand men, and for two months I have only been joined by a single battalion. I do my duty; the army does its part: my soul is lacerated, but my conscience is at ease. I never received a fourth part of the succours which the minister of war announces in his despatches.

"To-day I shall allow the troops to repose, but to-morrow we shall renew our operations. I despair of preventing the raising the blockade of Mantua; should that disaster arrive, we shall soon be behind the Adda, if not over the Alps. The wounded are few, but they are the *élite* of the army. Our best officers are struck down; the army of Italy, reduced to a handful of heroes, is

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1796.

¹ Th. viii.
461. Nap.
iii. 357.

128.
He moves
down the
Adige, to
turn the
position of
Caldiero by
Arcola.

rapidly to the left, and all the corps, descending the course of the Adige, arrived before daybreak at Ronco. There they found a bridge of boats prepared, and the whole troops were rapidly passed to the other side, and found themselves in an immense sea of morasses. A general feeling of joy was immediately diffused over the army : the soldiers now perceived that the contest for Italy was not abandoned, and, passing quickly from one extreme to another, prepared with alacrity to follow the footsteps of their leader, without any regard to the fearful odds to which they were exposed.¹

Having perceived, during the former action at Caldiero, that the position was too strong to be carried by an attack in front, Napoleon had resolved to assail it in flank, by the village of ARCOLA, and for that purpose placed his army in the midst of the morasses, which stretch from thence to the banks of the Po. He thought with reason that, on the narrow causeways which traversed these marshes, the superiority of numbers on the part of the enemy would be unavailing ; every thing would come to depend on the resolution of the heads of columns ; and he hoped that the courage of his soldiers, restored by being thus brought to combat on equal terms with the enemy, and animated by this novel species of warfare, would prevail over the discipline and tenacity of the Germans. The position which he had chosen was singularly well adapted exhausted. The heroes of Lodi, of Millesimo, of Castiglione, of Bassano, are dead, or in hospital ; there remains only their reputation, and the pride they have given to the soldiers. Joubert, Lanusse, Victor, Murat, Charlot, are wounded : we are abandoned in the extremity of Italy.

"I have lost few soldiers, but those who have fallen are the flower of the army, whom it is impossible to replace. Such as remain have devoted themselves to death. Perhaps the hour of the brave Augereau, of the intrepid Massena, of Berthier, is about to strike ; what, then, will become of these brave soldiers ? This consideration renders me circumspect ; I know not how to brave death, when it would so certainly be the ruin of those who have so long been the object of my solicitude.

"In a few days we shall make a last effort ; should fortune prove favourable, we shall take Mantua, and with it Italy. Had I received the 83d, three thousand five hundred strong, I would have answered for every thing : in a few days forty thousand men will perhaps not give me the same security."—*Confidential Despatch, 14th Nov. ii. 246-251.*

for the purpose in view. Three chaussées branch off from Ronco; one, following the left bank of the Adige, ascends that river to Verona; one, in the centre, leads straight to Arcola, by a stone bridge over the little stream of the Alpon; the third, on the right, follows the descending course of the Adige, along its right bank, to Albaredo. Three columns were moved forward on these chaussées; that on the left was destined to approach Verona, and observe that town so as to secure it from any sudden attack of the enemy; that in the centre, to attack the flank of their position by the village of Arcola; that on the right, to cut off their retreat.¹

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1796.

¹ Nap. iii.
358, 360.
Th. viii. 462,
463. Personal obser-
vation.

At daybreak on the 15th, Massena advanced on the first chaussée as far as a small eminence, which brought him in sight of the steeples of Verona, and removed all anxiety in that quarter as to the ultimate destination of the troops. Augereau, with the division in the centre, pushed, without being perceived, to the bridge of Arcola; but his advanced guard was there met by three battalions of Croats, who kept up so heavy a fire on the head of the column, that, notwithstanding the greatest exertions on the part of the soldiers, they were driven back. In vain Augereau himself hastened to the front, and led them again to the charge: the fire at the bridge was so violent that he was arrested, and compelled to halt. Meanwhile, Alvinzi, whose attention was fixed on Verona, where he imagined the bulk of the enemy's forces to be, was confounded in the morning at hearing a violent fire in the marshes. At first he imagined that it was merely a few light troops, but soon intelligence arrived from all quarters that the enemy were advancing in force on all the dikes, and threatened the flank and the rear of his position. He immediately despatched two divisions along the chaussées by which the enemy was approaching; that commanded by Mitrouski advanced to defend the village of Arcola, while that under Provera marched against the division of Massena. The latter column soon commenced

129.
Dreadful ac-
tions there.
15th Nov.

CHAP.
XX.

1796.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. vii.
196, 198.
Nap. iii. 361,
362. Th.
viii. 463,
465.

an attack on their antagonists, but they were unable to withstand the impetuous shock of Massena's grenadiers, and were driven back with heavy loss. Mitrouski, at the same time, passed through Arcola, crossed the bridge, and attacked the corps of Augereau; but they also were repulsed, and followed to the bridge by the victorious French. There commenced a desperate struggle; the Republican column advanced with the utmost intrepidity, but they were received with so tremendous a fire from the artillery in front, and a line of infantry stationed along the banks of the Alpon in flank, that they staggered and fell back.¹

130.
Heroic
courage of
Napoleon—
both parties
retire at
night.

Napoleon, deeming the possession of Arcola indispensable not only to his future operations, but to the safety of his own army, put himself with his generals at the head of the column, seized a standard, advanced without shrinking through a tempest of shot, and planted it on the middle of the bridge. But the fire there became so violent that his grenadiers hesitated, and, seizing the general in their arms, bore him back amidst a cloud of smoke, the dead and the dying, and, to prevent his being made prisoner, hid him among some alder bushes in the morass on the side of the road. The Austrians instantly rushed over the bridge, and pushed the crowd of fugitives into the marsh, where Napoleon lay up to the middle in water, while the enemy's soldiers for a minute surrounded him on all sides. The French grenadiers soon perceived that their commander was left behind; the cry ran through their ranks, "Forward to save the General!" and, returning to the charge, they drove back the Austrians, and extricated Napoleon from his perilous situation. During this terrible strife, Lannes received three wounds. His aide-de-camp, Meuron, was killed by his side, when covering his general with his body, and almost all his personal staff were badly wounded. Meanwhile, Guieux, who commanded the column which had been moved against Albaredo, had crossed the Adige, passed through that

place, and was directly in rear of the village of Arcola ; but it was too late. During the desperate stand there made by the Austrians, Alvinzi had gained time to draw off his baggage and artillery, and it was no longer possible to take the enemy in rear. The Austrians abandoned Arcola, and drew up their army, facing the marshes, at the foot of the heights of Caldiero. In the night, Napoleon, on his side, withdrew his forces to the right bank of the Adige, leaving only an advanced guard on the left bank ; while the Austrians re-occupied the village of Arcola, and all the ground which had been so vehemently disputed on the preceding day. The following day they even advanced, in the confidence of victory, along the dikes, to within six hundred yards of the village of Ronco ; but when they were thus far engaged in the defiles, the French attacked them with the bayonet, and drove back their columns, after an obstinate engagement, to the vicinity of Arcola. The battle continued the whole day with various success, and at nightfall both parties retired, the Austrians over the Alpon, the Republicans across the Adige.¹

16th Nov.

¹ Nap. iii.
363, 367.
Th. viii. 467,
468. Vict.
et Conq. vii.
200, 203.
O'Meara, i.
216, and ii.
226.

During the whole of these eventful days, big with the fate of Italy and the world, the conduct of the Austrian generals was timid, and unworthy of the brave troops whom they commanded. Davidovich, while the contest was raging on the lower Adige, remained in total inactivity on the upper part of that stream ; while Alvinzi, fettered by secret instructions from the Aulic Council to attempt nothing hazardous, and rather keep on the defensive, in order to facilitate the secret negotiations which were going forward or about to commence, repeatedly halted in the career of success, and lost the fairest opportunities of crushing his adversary. Napoleon, aware, from the treachery which constantly prevailed at the Imperial headquarters, of these secret restrictions, augmented the irresolution of the commander-in-chief by privately despatching intelligence from Verona to him of the approaching mission of

131.
Timid conduct of the Austrian generals.

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1796.

Clarke to conduct negotiations for peace, of the conferences opened at Paris with Great Britain, and the probability of an immediate accommodation. Alvinzi rejected the proposal for an armistice which he made, but suspended his movements to join Davidovich, and paralysed every successful operation for fear of injuring the negotiations. To such a length did this timidity proceed, that when, after the repulse of the French from Arcola, his bravest officers besought him instantly to form a junction with Davidovich, and terminate the war by a general attack on Verona; instead of following the heroic advice, he retired towards Vicenza.¹

¹ Hard. iv.
67, 75.

132.
Renewal of
the battle.
17th Nov.

Again the sun rose on this dreadful scene of carnage, and both parties advanced, with diminished numbers but undecaying fury, to the struggle which was to decide the fate of Italy. They met in the middle of the dikes, and fought with the utmost animosity. The French column in the centre was routed, and driven back so far, that the Austrian balls fell upon the bridge of Ronco; when the action was restored by a regiment which Napoleon had placed in ambuscade among the willows on the side of the road, and which attacked the victorious column in flank, when disordered by success, with such vigour, that they were almost all driven into the marshes. Massena, on his side, experienced similar vicissitudes, and was only enabled to keep his ground by placing himself at the head of the column, and leading the soldiers on with his hat on the point of his sword. Towards noon, however, Napoleon perceiving that the enemy were exhausted with fatigue, while his own soldiers were comparatively fresh, deemed the moment for decisive success arrived, and ordered a general charge of all his forces along both chaussées; and having cleared them of the enemy, and forced the passage of the Alpon, with the greater part of Massena's division, by a flying bridge near its confluence with the Adige, he formed his troops in order of battle at their extremity, on the firm ground, having the right

towards Porto Legnago and the left at Arcola. By orders of the French general, the garrison of the former place issued forth with four pieces of cannon, and debouched by San Gregario, so as to take the enemy in rear; while a body of trumpeters was sent, under cover of the willows, to their extreme left flank, with orders to sound a charge, as soon as the action was fully engaged along the whole line. These measures were completely successful. The Austrian commander, while bravely resisting in front, hearing a cannonade in his rear, and the trumpets as of a whole division of cavalry on his flank, ordered a retreat, and, after a desperate struggle of three days' duration, yielded the victory to his enemies. Alvinzi had stationed eight thousand men in echelon along his line of retreat, so that he was enabled to retire in good order, and with very little further loss. It was so apparent to all the Austrian army that this last retreat was the result of a secret understanding with the French general, and connected with the negotiation now in progress, that they openly and loudly expressed their indignation. One colonel broke his sword in pieces, and declared he would no longer serve under a commander whose conduct brought disgrace on his troops. Certain it is, that Alvinzi, during this dreadful strife at Arcola, had neither evinced the capacity nor the spirit of a general worthy to combat with Napoleon: not that he was in reality deficient in either, but that the ruinous restrictions of the Aulic Council paralysed all his movements; and the dread of hazarding anything on the eve of a negotiation, made him throw away every chance of success.¹

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1796.

While this desperate struggle was going forward in the marshes of Arcola, Davidovich, who had opened the campaign with such brilliant success, was far from following up his advantages with the vigour which might have been expected. He merely advanced with his forces to the neighbourhood of Verona on the 18th, following Vaubois, who abandoned the positions of Corona and Rivoli on his

¹ Hard. iv.
71, 77. Nap.
iii. 368, 369.
Th. viii. 470,
472. Jom.
ix. 172, 192.

133.
Feeble operations of
Davidovich.

Nov. 18.

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1796.

approach ; whereas, had he pressed him hard on the preceding days, Napoleon would have been compelled to cross the Adige, and raise the siege of Mantua. Without losing an instant, the French general returned with a large part of his forces through Verona, and compelled Davidovich to retire into the Tyrol,—the French resuming their old positions at Corona and Rivoli ; while Augereau drove the enemy from Dolce, with the loss of one thousand prisoners and nine pieces of cannon. The inhabitants of Verona were lost in astonishment when they beheld the army which had left their walls by the gate of Milan three days before, return in triumph, after so terrible a combat, by the gate of Venice ; and, without halting, pass through the town to make head against the fresh enemies who approached from the Tyrol. Alvinzi, when Napoleon was absent in pursuit of Davidovich, advanced towards Verona, now chiefly occupied by invalids and wounded men, and a universal joy pervaded the army when the order to march in that direction was given. But his old irresolution soon returned ; the instructions of the Aulic Council prevailed over his better genius, and the final order to retire to Vicenza again spread grief and despair among his heroic followers.¹

¹ Hard. iv.
75. Nap.
iii. 371.
Th. viii.
472.

134.
Results of
these ac-
tions.

The results of the battle of Arcola, how glorious soever to the French arms, were by no means so decisive as those of the previous victories gained in the campaign. The actions had been most obstinately contested ; and though the Imperialists ultimately retired, and Mantua was unrelieved, yet the victors were nearly as much weakened as the vanquished. The loss of the French in all the actions, including those with Davidovich, was fifteen thousand men, while that of the Austrians did not exceed eighteen thousand. During the confusion consequent on such desperate engagements, the garrison of Mantua made frequent sorties ; and Wurmser availed himself with such skill of the temporary interruption of the blockade, that considerable convoys of provisions were introduced into the place.²

² Jom. ix.
231. Nap.
iii. 371, 372.
Th. viii. 472.
473. Vict. et
Conq. vii.
208, 212.

By putting the garrison on half rations, and calculating on the great mortality among the troops, which daily diminished their number, he still had hopes that he could maintain his position till a fourth effort was made for his relief.

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1796.

The intelligence of these hard-fought victories excited the most enthusiastic transports throughout all France. The battle of Arcola especially, with its desperate chances and perilous passages, was the object of universal admiration. The people were never weary of celebrating the genius which had selected, amidst the dikes of Ronco, a field of battle where numbers were unavailing and courage irresistible; and of admiring the heroic intrepidity which made the soldier forget the general, and recalled the exploits of the knights of romance. Everywhere medals were exhibited of the young general on the bridge of Arcola, with the standard in his hand, in the midst of the fire and smoke. The Councils decreed that the army of Italy had deserved well of the country, and that the standards which Napoleon and Augereau had borne on that memorable occasion, should be given to them, to be preserved as precious trophies in their families.¹

135.
Extraordi-
nary joy at
Paris.

¹ Th. viii.
473.

Nor were the Austrians less distinguished by patriotic feeling. When the triumphs of the Archduke Charles on the Danube had saved Germany, and raised to the highest pitch the ardour of the people, the reverses in Italy came to damp the general joy, and renew, in a quarter where it was least expected, the peril of the monarchy. With unconquerable resolution they prepared to face the danger; the affectionate ardour of the Hereditary States showed itself in the moment of alarm; the people everywhere flew to arms; numerous battalions of volunteers were formed to repair the chasms in the regular forces; Vienna alone raised four regiments, which received standards embroidered by the hand of the Empress;² and, before the end of the year, a fourth army was formed in the mountains of Friuli and the Tyrol, not inferior either in numbers

136.
Vast efforts
of the Aus-
trians.

² Toul. vi.
142. Jom.
ix. 267.
Hard. iv.
152.

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XX.1796.
137.Mission of
Clarke to
negotiate
for peace.

or resolution to those which had wasted away under the sword of Napoleon.

After the battle of Arcola, the negotiation, the commencement of which had been attended with such fatal effects to the Imperial fortunes during the action, was continued with the greatest activity between the headquarters of the two armies. General Clarke, the republican envoy, arrived at the headquarters of Napoleon, and it was at first proposed to conclude an armistice of three months, in order to facilitate the negotiations; but this the French general, who saw the command of Italy on the point of slipping from his grasp, and was well aware that the fate of the war depended on Mantua, resolutely opposed.* Clarke, however, continued to argue in favour of the armistice, and produced the instructions of his government, which were precise on that point; but Napoleon, secure of the support of Barras, at once let him know that he was resolved not to share his authority with any one. "If you come here to obey me," said he, "I will always see you with pleasure; if not, the sooner you return to those who sent you the better."¹

¹ Hard. iv.
133, 134.138.
Which is
thwarted by
Napoleon.

Clarke felt he was mastered; he did not answer a word: from that moment the negotiation fell entirely into the hands of Napoleon, and came to nothing. So completely, indeed, did the Republican envoy fall under the government of the young general, that he himself wrote to the Directory—"It is indispensable that the general-in-chief should conduct all the diplomatic operations in Italy;" and thenceforth his attention was almost

* "Masters of Mantua," said he, "the enemy will be too happy to leave us the line of the Rhine. But if an armistice is concluded, we must abandon that fortress till May, and then find it completely provisioned, so that its fall cannot be reckoned on before the unhealthy months of autumn. We will lose the money (30,000,000) we expect from Rome, which cannot be influenced but by the fall of Mantua: and the Emperor, being nearer the scene of action, will recruit his army much more effectually than we can, and in the opening of the campaign we shall be inferior to the enemy. Fifteen days' repose is of essential service to the army of Italy; three months would ruin it. To conclude an armistice just now, is to cut ourselves off from all chance of success—in a word, every thing depends on the fall of Mantua."—*Corresp. Confid.* ii. 423.

entirely confined to arresting the scandalous depredations of the civil and military authorities, both on the Italian states and the funds of the Republic—an employment which soon absorbed all his time, and was attended with as little success as the attempts of Napoleon himself had been.¹ The conferences which were opened at Vicenza in December, were broken up on the 3d January, without having led to any result; and it was resolved to try once more the fate of arms. For two months after the battle of Arcola, and during this negotiation, both parties remained in a state of inactivity, and great efforts were made on either side to recruit the armies for the final contest which was approaching. Scarce a day elapsed without dense and ardent battalions joining the Imperial standards. Napoleon also received considerable reinforcements; numbers of the sick were discharged from the hospitals, and rejoined their ranks on the approach of the cold weather, and ten thousand men flocked to his standards from the interior; so that, by the beginning of January 1797, he had forty-six thousand men under arms. Ten thousand blockaded Mantua, and the remainder of the army was on the line of the Adige, from the edge of the Po to the rocks of the Monte Baldo.²

It was high time that the Imperialists should advance to the relief of Mantua; for it was now reduced to the last extremity from want of provisions. At a council of war, held in the end of December, it was decided that it was indispensable that instant intelligence should be sent to Alvinzi of their desperate situation. A British officer attached to the garrison volunteered to perform in person the perilous mission, which he executed with equal courage and address. He set out, disguised as a peasant, from Mantua, on the 29th December, at nightfall, in the midst of a deep fall of snow, eluded the vigilance of the French patrols, and, after surmounting a thousand hardships and dangers, arrived at the headquarters of Alvinzi, at Bassano, on the 4th January,³ the day after the

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¹ Report,
Dec. 1796,
by Clarke,
Confid.
Corresp.² Jom. ix.
262. Th.
viii. 507.
Hard. iv.
136, 149.139.
Distress of
Mantua.³ Hard. iv.
153, 154.

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conferences at Vicenza were broken up. Great destinies awaited this enterprising officer. He was Colonel GRAHAM,* afterwards victor at Barrossa, and the first general who planted the British standard on the soil of France.

140.
The Aus-
trians make
a fourth
effort to
relieve
Mantua.

The Austrian plan of attack on this occasion was materially different from what it had formerly been. Adhering still to their favourite system of dividing their forces, and being masters of the course of the Brenta from Bassano to Roveredo, they transferred the bulk of their troops to the upper Adige, where Alvinzi himself took the command of thirty-five thousand men. A subordinate force of fifteen thousand was destined to advance by the plain of Padua to Mantua, with a view to raise the siege, extricate Wurmser, and push on to the Ecclesiastical States, where the Pope had recently been making great preparations, and from whose levies it was hoped the numerous staff and dismounted dragoons of the veteran marshal would form an efficient force. This project had every appearance of success; but, unfortunately, it became known to the French general, from the despatches which announced it to Wurmser falling into his hands, as the messenger who bore them was on the point of clearing the last lines of the blockade of Mantua.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
408, 409.

141.
They ad-
vance to
Rivoli.
12th Jan.
1797.

On the 12th January 1797, the advanced guard of Alvinzi attacked the Republican posts on the Monte Baldo, and forced them back to the plateau of Rivoli; while, on the same day, the troops in the plain pushed forward, drove in all the French videttes towards Porto Legnago, and maintained a desultory fire along the whole line of the lower Adige. For some time Napoleon was uncertain on which side the principal attack would be made; but soon the alarming accounts of the great display of force on the upper part of the river, and the secret intelligence which he received from treachery at the Austrian headquarters, left no doubt that the enemy's principal forces were accu-

* The late Lord Lynedoch.

mulated near Rivoli ; and accordingly he set out with the whole centre of his army to support Joubert, who was there struggling with immensely superior forces. He arrived at two in the morning on the plateau of RIVOLI. The weather was clear and beautiful ; an unclouded moon silvered the fir-clad precipices of the mountains ; but the horizon to the northward was illuminated by the fires of innumerable bivouacs, and from the neighbouring heights his experienced eye could discover the lights of nearly forty thousand men. This great force was divided into five columns, which filled the whole space between the Adige and the lake of Garda ; the principal one, under Quasdanovich, composed of all the artillery, cavalry, and a strong body of grenadiers, followed the high-road, and was destined to mount the plateau by the steep zigzag ascent on the right of the French position. Three other corps of infantry received orders to climb the amphitheatre of mountains which surrounded it in front, and, when the action was engaged on the high-road, descend upon the French army ; while a fifth, under Lusignan, was directed to wind round the base of the plateau, gain the high-road in the rear, and cut off their retreat to Verona. The plan was ably conceived, and had nearly succeeded ; with a general of inferior ability to Napoleon, and troops of less resolution than his army, it unquestionably would have done so.¹

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XX.

1797.

14th Jan.

¹ Th. viii.
513. Nap.
iii. 414.
Jom. ix.
275.

To oppose this formidable force, Napoleon had only thirty thousand men, but he had the advantage of being in position on a plain, elevated among the mountains, while his adversaries must necessarily be fatigued in endeavouring to reach it. He had, moreover, sixty pieces of cannon, and a numerous body of cavalry, in excellent condition. He immediately perceived that it was necessary, at all hazards, to keep his ground on the plateau ; and, by so doing, he hoped to prevent the junction of the enemy's masses, and overthrow them separately, as they were toiling up the steep to commence the attack.² Before day-

142.
Forces of the
French.

² Th. viii.
514. Nap.
iii. 414.
Jom. ix. 276.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
34, 37.

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XX.

1797.

break he moved forward the tirailleurs of Joubert, to drive back the advanced posts of the Imperialists, who had already ascended to the plateau, and, by the light of the moon, arranged his whole force with admirable precision on its summit.

143.
Battle of
Rivoli.
14th Jan.

The action began at nine o'clock, by the Austrian columns, which descended from the semicircular heights of the Monte Baldo, attacking the French left. After a desperate resistance, the regiments stationed there were broken, and fled in disorder; upon which Napoleon galloped to the village of Rivoli, where the division of Massena, which had marched all night, was reposing from its fatigues; led it to the front, and, by a vigorous charge, restored the combat in that quarter. This check, however, had forced Joubert on the right to give ground; the divisions in front pressed down upon the plateau, while at the same instant the head of the column of the Imperial grenadiers appeared at the top of the zigzag windings of the high-road, having by incredible efforts of valour forced that perilous ascent, and their cavalry and artillery began to debouche upon the level surface at its summit. Meanwhile, the division of Lusignan, which had wound unperceived round the left flank of the Republicans, appeared directly in their rear; and the Imperial soldiers, deeming the destruction of the French army certain, gave loud cheers on all sides, which were re-echoed from the surrounding cliffs, and clapped their hands, as they successively took up their ground. The Republicans, attacked in front, flank, and rear at the same time, saw their retreat cut off, and no resource from the bayonets of the Austrians, but in the precipices of the mountains.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
416. Th.
viii. 516.
Jom. viii.
279. Vict.
et Conq. viii.
38, 40.

144.
Extreme
danger of
Napoleon,
and his
stratagem
to avoid
destruction.

At this perilous moment the presence of mind of Napoleon did not forsake him. He instantly, in order to gain time, sent a flag of truce to Alvinzi, proposing a suspension of arms for half an hour, as he had some propositions to make in consequence of the arrival of a courier with despatches from Paris. The Austrian general, ever

acting on the idea so unhappily impressed on all its officers by the Imperial government, that military were to be subordinate to diplomatic operations, fell into the snare : the suspension, at the critical moment, was agreed to ; and the march of the Austrians was arrested at the very moment when the soldiers, with loud shouts, were exclaiming—"We have them ! we have them !" Junot repaired to the Austrian headquarters, from whence, after a conference of an hour, he returned, as might have been expected, without having come to any accommodation : but meanwhile the critical period had passed ; Napoleon had gained time to face the danger, and made the movements requisite to repel these numerous attacks. Joubert, with the light infantry, was ordered to face about on the extremity to oppose Quasdanovich ; Leclerc and Lasalle, with the light cavalry and flying artillery, flew likewise to the menaced point ; while a regiment of infantry was directed to the heights of Tiffaro, to make head against the corps of Lusignan. Far from being disconcerted by the appearance of the troops in his rear, Napoleon exclaimed, pointing to them, "These are already our prisoners ;" and the confident tone in which he spoke soon communicated itself to the soldiers, who repeated the cheering expression. The head of Quasdanovich's division, which had so bravely won the ascent, received in front by a terrible fire of grape-shot, charged on one flank by Lasalle's horse, and exposed on the other to a close discharge of musketry from Joubert, broke and staggered backwards down the steep. The fugitives, rushing headlong through the column which was toiling up, soon threw the whole into inextricable confusion ; horse, foot, and cannon struggled together, under a plunging fire from the French batteries, which blew up some ammunition-waggons, and produced a scene of frightful disorder. No sooner was the plateau delivered from this flank attack, than Napoleon accumulated his forces on the troops which had descended from the semicircle of the Monte Baldo ;¹ and that gallant band, destitute

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¹ Jom. viii.
282, 283.
Th. viii. 518.
Nap. iii. 416.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
42, 44.

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of artillery, and deprived now of the expected aid from the corps in flank, soon gave way, and fled in confusion to the mountains, where great numbers were made prisoners.

145.
Decisive
victory of
Napoleon.

During these decisive successes, the division of Lusignan had gained ground on the troops opposed to it, and came to the heights in rear of the army, in time to witness the destruction of the three divisions in the mountains. From that moment they foresaw their own fate. The victorious troops were speedily directed against this brave division, now insulated from all support, and depressed by the ruin which it had witnessed in the other parts of the army. For some time they stood firm; but the fire of fifteen pieces of heavy artillery, to which they had nothing to oppose, at length compelled them to retreat; and, before they had receded far, they met the division of Rey, the reserve of Massena, which was approaching. Such was the consternation produced by this unexpected apparition, that the whole division laid down its arms; while Quasdanovich, now left to his own resources, retired up the valley of the Adige, and the broken remains of the centre divisions sought refuge behind the rocky bed of the Tasso.¹

¹ Th. viii.
518, 519.
Jom. viii.
283, 284.
Nap. iii. 417.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
44, 45.

146.
He hastens
to the lower
Adige.

Not content with these splendid triumphs, Napoleon, on the very night in which they were gained, flew to the assistance of the troops on the lower Adige, with part of the division of Massena, which had marched all the preceding night, and fought on the following day. It was full time that he should do so, for on the very day on which the battle of Rivoli was fought, Provera had forced the passage of the Adige at Anghiara, and marched between Augereau and the blockading force by Sanguenetto to the neighbourhood of Mantua, the siege of which he threatened to raise on the following morning. Augereau, it is true, had collected his forces, attacked the rearguard of the Austrians during their march, and taken fifteen hundred prisoners and fourteen pieces of cannon; ² but still

15th Jan.
² Jom. viii.
290. Th.
viii. 520.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
49, 50.

the peril was imminent that the main body of Provera's forces would gain the fort of St George, an outwork of Mantua, and put the blockading force between two fires. Fully aware of the danger, Napoleon marched all night and the whole of the following day, and arrived in the evening in the neighbourhood of Mantua.

Meanwhile the hussars of Hohenzollern, forming Provera's advanced guard, presented themselves at sunrise on the 15th, at the gate of Fort St George, and being dressed in white cloaks, were nearly mistaken for a regiment of French, and admitted within the walls. But the error having been discovered by an old sergeant who was cutting wood near the gate, the drawbridge was suddenly drawn up, and the alarm communicated to the garrison. Hohenzollern advanced at the gallop, but, before he could get in, the gates were closed, and a discharge of grape-shot repulsed the assailants. All that day, the garrison under Miollis combated on the ramparts, and gave time for the succours from Rivoli to arrive. Provera sent a boat across the lake to warn Wurmser of his approach, and concert a general attack, on the next day, upon the blockading force; and in pursuance of the summons, the brave veteran presented himself at the trenches on the following morning with a large part of the garrison. But the arrival of Napoleon not only frustrated all these preparations, but proved fatal to the Austrian division. During the night he pushed forward four regiments, which he had brought with him, between the forts of la Favorite and St George, so as to prevent Wurmser from effecting a junction with the Imperialists, who approached to raise the siege, and strengthened Serrurier at the former point, in order to enable him to repel any attack from the garrison. At daybreak, the battle commenced at all points. Wurmser, after an obstinate conflict, was thrown back into the fortress;¹ while Provera, surrounded by superior forces, and tracked in all his doublings, like a furious stag by ruthless hunters, was compelled to lay

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147.
Operations
of Provera
there, who
is forced to
surrender.

16th Jan.

¹ Th. viii.
521. Nap.
iii. 421.
Jom. viii.
290, 293.
Vict. et
Cong. viii.
50, 54.

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down his arms, with six thousand men. In this engagement, the 57th regiment acquired the surname of the *Terrible*, from the fury with which it threw itself on the Austrian line. It was commanded by VICTOR, afterwards Duke of Belluno, and one of the most distinguished marshals of the French empire.*

148.
Results of
these
battles.

Thus, in three days, by his admirable dispositions, and the extraordinary activity of his troops, did Napoleon not only defeat two Austrian armies of much greater force, taken together, than his own, but took from them eighteen thousand prisoners, twenty-four standards, and sixty pieces of cannon. Such was the loss of the enemy besides, in killed and wounded, that the Imperialists were totally disabled from keeping the field, and the French left in undisputed possession of the whole peninsula. History has few examples to exhibit of successes so decisive, achieved by forces so inconsiderable. In their report on these disasters, the Aulic Council generously threw no blame on Alvinzi, but openly avowed the treachery at their headquarters, which made all their designs known before they were carried into execution. "The chief fatality," said they, "consisted in this, that our designs were constantly made known to the enemy before they were acted upon. Treachery rendered abortive the combinations of Marshal Wurmser for the relief of Mantua; treachery plunged Alvinzi into all his misfortunes. General Buonaparte himself says, in his report, that from different sources he had become acquainted with the designs of the enemy before their execution;¹ and, on the last occasion, it was only on the 4th January that Alvinzi

¹ Hard. iv.
164, 167.
Jom. viii.
294. Nap.
iii. 422.
Vict. et
Cong. viii.
53, 54.

Early history
of Victor.

* Perrin Victor, afterwards Duke of Belluno, was born at la Marche in Lorraine, in 1766, of humble parents. At the age of fifteen he entered the artillery; but it was not till the period of the Revolution that he obtained any rapid advancement. In 1793 he was with his regiment at the siege of Toulon, where he attracted the notice of Napoleon by the skill and precision with which the fire of his pieces was maintained; and, in consequence of his recommendation, he was made a general of brigade. He was twice wounded during the siege; but, having recovered from these injuries, he received a command in the following year in the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, and bore a distinguished part in the sieges of Saint Elmo and Rosas, and in all the actions which took place in that

received his instructions for the attack, and on the 2d January it was published by Buonaparte in the Gazette of Milan." Alvinzi, notwithstanding his disasters, was continued in favour; but Provera was exiled to his estates in Carinthia, upon the ground that he had transgressed his orders in advancing against Mantua before he had received intelligence of the progress of Alvinzi.

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This was the last effort of which Austria was capable, and the immediate consequence of its defeat was the complete subjugation of the peninsula. The remains of Alvinzi's corps retired in opposite directions; one part towards Trent, and another towards Bassano. Napoleon, whose genius never appeared so strongly as in pursuing the remains of a beaten army, followed them up without intermission. Laudon, who had taken post at Roveredo, with eight thousand men, in order to defend as long as possible the valley of the upper Adige, was driven by Joubert successively from that town and Trent, with the loss of five hundred prisoners; while Massena, by a rapid march over the mountains, made himself master of Primolano, descended into the gorges of the Val Sugana, turned the position of Bassano, and drove the Austrians, with a loss of a thousand prisoners, through Treviso and over the Tagliamento; where Alvinzi at length, by the valley of the Drave, reunited the remnant of his scattered forces.¹

149.
Vigorous
measures of
Napoleon in
pursuit.

1 Jom. viii.
302, 304.
Nap. iii. 421,
422. Vict.
et Conq. viii.
55, 57.

Notwithstanding these disasters, the public spirit of the Austrian monarchy remained unsubdued, and the cabinet of Vienna continued unshaken in its resolution to prosecute the war with vigour. On the other hand, the

150.
Patriotic
spirit in the
Austrian
dominions.

quarter, till the treaty of Bâle terminated the war with the Spanish monarchy. Being then transferred to the army of Italy, he commanded a brigade at the battle of Loano in autumn 1795, and acquired distinction at the battle of Dego under Napoleon; but his first great exploit was in the actions against Provera at la Favorite and St George, where his skill in combination, and vehemence of attack, compelled that general to surrender with six thousand men. In 1804 he was made a marshal of the empire; and he bore a prominent part in all the campaigns of Napoleon, down to his fall in 1814.—See *Biographie des Contemporains*, xx. 193, 194 (VICTOR.)

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Directory were so much impressed with the imminent risk which the Italian army had run, both at Arcola and Rivoli, and the evident peril to the Republic from the rising fame and domineering character of Napoleon, that they were very desirous of peace, and authorised Clarke to sign it on condition that Belgium and the frontier of the Rhine were given to France, an indemnity secured to the Stadtholder in Germany, and all its possessions in Italy restored to Austria. But Napoleon again resolutely opposed these instructions, and would not permit Clarke to open the proposed negotiations. "Before Mantua falls," said he, "every negotiation is premature; and Mantua will be in our hands in fifteen days. These conditions will never meet with my approbation. The Republic is entitled, besides the frontier of the Rhine, to insist for the establishment of a state in Italy, which may secure the French influence there, and retain in subjection Genoa, Sardinia, and the Pope. Without that, Venice, enlightened at last as to its real danger, will unite with the emperor, and restrain the growth of democratic principles in its Italian possessions." The influence of Napoleon again prevailed; the proposed negotiation was never opened, and Clarke remained at Milan, occupied with his subordinate but overwhelming duty of restraining the rapacity of the commissaries of the army.¹

¹ Hard. iv.
170, 174.

151.
Surrender
of Mantua.
Jan. 28.

Mantua did not long hold out after the destruction of the last army destined for its relief. The half of its once numerous garrison was in the hospital; they had consumed all their horses, and the troops, placed for months on half rations, had nearly exhausted their provisions. In this extremity Wurmser proposed to Serrurier to capitulate: the French commander stated that he could give no definite answer till the arrival of the general-in-chief. Napoleon in consequence hastened to Roverbella, where he found Klenau, the Austrian aide-de-camp, expatiating on the powerful means of resistance which Wurmser possessed, and the great stores of provisions which still

remained in the magazines. Wrapped in his cloak near the fire, he overheard the conversation, without taking any part in it, or making himself known. When it was concluded, he approached the table, took up the pen, and wrote on the margin his answer to all the propositions of Wurmser, and, when it was finished, said to Klenau, "If Wurmser had only provisions for eighteen or twenty days, and he spoke of surrendering, he would have merited no favourable terms ; but I respect the age, the valour, and the misfortunes of the marshal. Here are the conditions which I offer him, if he surrender to-morrow : should he delay a fortnight, a month, or two months, he shall have the same conditions ; he may wait till he has consumed his last morsel of bread. I am now about to cross the Po to march upon Rome : return and communicate my intentions to your general." The aid-de-camp, who now perceived that he was in the presence of Napoleon, was penetrated with gratitude for the generosity of the conqueror ; and, finding that it was useless to dissemble, confessed that they had only provisions left for three days. The terms of capitulation were immediately agreed on. Wurmser was allowed to retire to Austria with all his staff and five hundred men ; the remainder of the garrison, which, including the sick, was still eighteen thousand strong, surrendered their arms, and were conveyed to Trieste to be exchanged. Fifty standards, a bridge equipage, and above five hundred pieces of artillery, comprising all those captured at the raising of the first siege, fell into the hands of the conqueror. Napoleon set out himself to Florence to conduct the expedition against Rome, and Serrurier had the honour of seeing the marshal with all his staff defile before him. Napoleon had too much grandeur of mind to insult the vanquished veteran by his own presence on the occasion : his delicacy was noted by all Europe ; and, like the statues of Brutus and Cassius at the funeral of Junia, he was the more present to the mind because he was withdrawn from the sight.¹

¹ O'Meara, i. 126. Nap. iii. 423, 425. Journ. viii. 305. Th. viii. 523, 524.

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152.
Napoleon
marches
towards
Rome, and
concludes
the treaty of
Tolentino
with the
Pope.

19th Feb.

Having achieved this great conquest, Napoleon directed his arms against Rome. The power which had vanquished, after so desperate a struggle, the strength of Austria, was not long of crushing the feeble forces of the supreme Pontiff. During the strife on the Adige, the Pope had refused to ratify the treaty of Bologna, and had openly engaged in hostile measures at the conclusion of the campaign, in conjunction with the forces of Austria. The French troops, in consequence, crossed the Apennines; and during the march Wurmser had an opportunity of returning the generous conduct of his adversary, by putting him on his guard against a conspiracy which had been formed against his life, and was thus the means of causing it to be frustrated. The papal troops were routed on the banks of the Senio: like the other Italian armies, the infantry fled on the first onset, before a shot had been heard to whistle among the bayonets; and Junot, after two hours' hard riding, found it impossible to make up with their cavalry. Ancona was speedily taken, with twelve hundred men, and one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon; while a small column on the other side of the Apennines pushed on as far as Foligno, and threatened Rome itself. Nothing remained to the Vatican but submission; and peace was concluded at Tolentino, on the 19th February, on terms the most humiliating to the Holy See. The Pope engaged to close his ports against the Allies; to cede Avignon and the Venaisin to France; to abandon Bologna, Ferrara, and the whole of Romagna, to the allies of the Republic in the Milanese; to admit a garrison of French troops into Ancona, till the conclusion of a general peace; and to pay a contribution of thirty millions of francs to the victorious Republic. Besides this, he was obliged to surrender a hundred of his principal works of art to the French commissioners: the trophies of ancient and modern genius were seized with merciless rapacity;¹ and in a short time the noblest specimens of the fine arts which existed in the world—the

¹ Jom. viii.
312, 313.
Nap. iii. 425.
O'Meara, ii.
127.

Apollo Belvidere, the Laocoon, the Transfiguration of Raphael, the Madonna del Foligno, and the St Jerome of Domenichino—were removed to the banks of the Seine.

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This treaty was concluded by the French under the idea that it would eventually prove fatal to the Holy See. Napoleon proposed to overturn at once the papal government:—"Can we not," said he, "unite Modena, Ferrara, and Romagna, and so form a powerful republic? May we not give Rome to the King of Spain, provided he recognises the new republic? I will give peace to the Pope on condition that he gives us three million of the treasure at Loretto, and pays the fifteen million which remain for the armistice. Rome cannot long exist deprived of its richest possessions; a revolution will speedily break out there." On their side, the Directory wrote as follows to Napoleon: "Your habits of reflection, general, must have taught you, that the Roman Catholic religion is the irreconcilable enemy of the Republic. The Directory, therefore, invite you to do every thing in your power to destroy the papal government, without in any degree compromising the fate of your army—either by subjecting Rome to another power, or, what would be better still, by establishing in its interior such a government as may render the rule of the priests odious and contemptible, secure the grand object, that the Pope and the cardinals shall lose all hope of remaining at Rome, and may be compelled to seek an asylum in some foreign state, where they may be entirely stripped of temporal power."¹

153.
Views of the
Directory in
this treaty.

¹ Corresp.
Confid. de
Napoléon, ii.
349 and 543.
Hard. iv.
181, 182.

Such was the campaign of 1796—glorious to the French arms, memorable in the history of the world. Certainly on no former occasion had successes so great been achieved in so short a time, or powers so vast been vanquished by forces so inconsiderable. From maintaining a painful contest on the mountain-ridges of their own frontier, from defending the Var and the Maritime Alps, the Republicans found themselves transported to the

154.
Retrospect
of the cam-
paign.

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Tyrol and the Tagliamento, threatening the hereditary states of Austria, and subduing the whole southern powers of Italy. An army which never mustered fifty thousand men in the field, though maintained by successive reinforcements nearly at that amount, had not only broken through the barrier of the Alps, subdued Piedmont, conquered Lombardy, and humbled the whole Italian states, but defeated, and almost destroyed, four powerful armies which Austria raised to defend her possessions, and wrenched the keys of Mantua from her grasp, under the eyes of the greatest successive arrays of armed men she had ever sent into the field. Successes so immense, gained against forces so vast and efforts so indefatigable, may almost be pronounced unparalleled in the annals of war.*

155.
Losses with
which it had
been at-
tended.

But although its victories in the field had been so brilliant, the internal situation of the Republic was in the highest degree discouraging; and it was more than doubtful whether it could continue for any length of time even so glorious a contest. Its condition is clearly depicted in a secret report, presented, by order of the Directory, on 20th December 1796, by General Clarke to Napoleon:—"The lassitude of war is experienced in all parts of the Republic. The people ardently desire peace; their murmurs are loud that it is not already concluded. The legislature desires it, commands it, no matter at what price; and its continued refusal to furnish to the Directory the necessary funds to carry on the contest, is the best proof of that fact. The finances are ruined; agriculture in vain demands the arms which are required for cultivation. The war is become so universal, as to threaten to overturn the Republic; all parties,

* In his Confidential Despatch to the Directory of 28th December 1796, Napoleon states the force with which he commenced the campaign at thirty-eight thousand five hundred men, the subsequent reinforcements at twelve thousand six hundred, and the losses by death and incurable wounds at seven thousand. There can be no doubt that he enormously diminished his losses and reinforcements; for the Directory maintained he had received reinforcements to the amount of fifty-seven thousand men.—*Corres. Conf.* ii. 312.

worn out with anxiety, desire the termination of the Revolution. Should our internal misery continue, the people, exhausted by suffering, having experienced none of the benefits which they expected, will establish a new order of things, which will in its turn generate fresh revolutions, and we shall undergo, for twenty or thirty years, all the agonies consequent on such convulsions."¹

Much of Napoleon's success was no doubt owing to the admirable character, unwearied energy, and indomitable courage of the troops composing the French army. The world had never seen an array framed of such materials. The terrible whirlwind which had overthrown the fabric of society in France, the patriotic spirit which had brought its whole population into the field, the grinding misery which had forced all its activity into war, had formed a union of intelligence, skill, and ability, among the private soldiers, such as had never before been witnessed in modern warfare. Men from the middle, even the higher ranks, were to be seen with the musket on their shoulders; the great levies of 1793 had spared neither high nor low; the career of glory and ambition could be entered only through the portals of the bivouac. Hence it was that the spirit which animated them was so fervent, and their intelligence so remarkable, that the humblest grenadiers anticipated all the designs of their commanders, and knew of themselves, in every situation of danger and difficulty, what should be done. When Napoleon spoke to them, in his proclamations, of Brutus, Scipio, and Tarquin, he was addressing men whose hearts thrilled at the recollections which these names awaken; and when he led them into action after a night-march of ten leagues, he commanded those who felt as thoroughly as himself the inestimable importance of time in war. With truth might Napoleon say, that his soldiers had surpassed the far-famed celerity of Cæsar's legions.²

But, however much was owing to the troops who obeyed, still more was to be ascribed to the general who commanded,

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¹ Report by
Clarke.
Corresp.
Conf. de
Nap. ii.
426.

156.

Extraordi-
nary com-
position of
the French
army.

² Th. viii.
522.

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157.

Great genius
of Napoleon.
His system
of war.

in this memorable campaign. In this struggle is to be seen the commencement of the new system of tactics which Napoleon brought to such perfection—that of accumulating forces in a central situation, striking with the whole mass the detached wings of the enemy, separating them from each other, and compensating by rapidity of movement for inferiority of numbers. Most of his triumphs were achieved by the steady and skilful application of this principle ; all, when he was inferior in numerical amount to his opponents. At Montenotte he broke into the centre of the Austro-Sardinian army, when it was executing a difficult movement through the mountains ; separated the Piedmontese from the Imperialists ; accumulated an overwhelming force against the latter at Dego, and routed the former when detached from their allies at Mondovi. When Wurmser approached Verona, with his army divided into parts separated from each other by a lake, Napoleon was on the brink of ruin ; but he retrieved his affairs by abandoning the siege of Mantua, and falling with superior numbers, first on Quasdanovich at Lonato, and then on Wurmser at Medola. When the second irruption of the Germans took place, and Wurmser still continued the system of dividing his troops, it was by a skilful use of his central position that the French general defeated his efforts ; first assailing with a superior force the subsidiary force at Roveredo, and then pursuing with the rapidity of lightning the main body of the invaders through the gorges of the Brenta. When Alvinzi assumed the command, and Vaubois was routed in the Tyrol, the affairs of the French were all but desperate ; but the central position and rapid movements of Napoleon again restored the balance—checking, in the first instance, the advance of Davidovich on the plateau of Rivoli, and next engaging in a mortal strife with Alvinzi in the marshes of Arcola. When Austria made her final effort, and Alvinzi surrounded Joubert at Rivoli, it was only by the most rapid movements, and almost incredible activity, that the double

attack was defeated; the same troops crushing the main body of the Austrians on the steeps of the Monte Baldo, who afterwards surrounded Provera on the lake of Mantua. A similar system was afterwards pursued with the greatest success by Wellington, in combating the superior armies of Soult and Marmont upon the frontiers of Portugal, and by Napoleon himself around the walls of Dresden in 1813, and in the plains of Champagne, in the year following.

But, to the success of such a system of operations, it is indispensable that the troops who undertake it should be superior in bodily activity and moral courage to their adversaries, and that the general-in-chief can securely leave a slender force to cope with the enemy in one quarter, while he is accumulating his masses to overwhelm them in another. Unless this is the case, the commander who throws himself at the head of an inconsiderable body into the midst of the enemy, will be certain of encountering instead of inflicting disaster. Without such a degree of courage and activity as enables him to calculate with certainty upon hours, and sometimes minutes, it is impossible to expect success from such a hazardous system. Of this a signal proof occurred in Bohemia in 1813, when the French, encouraged by their great triumph before Dresden, threw themselves inconsiderately into the midst of the Allies in the mountains of Töplitz; but, meeting there with the undaunted Russian and Prussian forces, they experienced the most dreadful reverses, and in a few days lost the fruit of a mighty victory.

The disasters of the Austrians were mainly owing to the injudicious plan which they so obstinately adopted, of dividing their force into separate bodies, and commencing an attack at the same time at stations so far distant, that the attacking columns could render little assistance to each other. This system may succeed very well against ordinary troops or timorous generals, who, the moment they hear of their flank being turned, or their communications menaced, lay down their arms, or fall back; but

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158.
But it will
not succeed
against
troops
equally
brave and
skilful.

159.
Cause of the
disasters of
the Aus-
trians.

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against intrepid soldiers, and a resolute commander, who turn fiercely on every side, and bring a preponderating mass first against one assailant, and then another, it is almost sure of leading to disaster. The Aulic Council was not to blame for adopting this system, in the first instance, against the French armies, because it might have been expected to succeed against ordinary troops, and had done so in many previous instances ; but they were inexcusable for continuing it so long, after the character of the opponents with whom they had to deal had so fully displayed itself. The system of concentric attacks rarely succeeds against an able and determined enemy, because the chances which the force in the centre has of beating first one column and then another, are so considerable. When it does, it is only when the different masses of the attacking party, as at Leipsic and Dresden, are so immense, that each can stand a separate encounter for itself, or can fall back, in the event of being outnumbered, without seriously endangering, by such a retreat, the safety of the other assailing columns.

160.
General re-
flections on
the cam-
paign.

The Italian campaign demonstrates, in the most signal manner, the vast importance of fortresses in war, and the vital consequence of such barriers to arrest the course of military conquest. The surrender of the strongholds of Coni, Alessandria, and Tortona, by giving the French a secure base for their operations, speedily made them masters of the whole of Lombardy ; while the single fortress of Mantua arrested their victorious arms for six months, and gave time to Austria to collect no less than four powerful armies for its deliverance. No man understood this better than Napoleon ; and accordingly, without troubling himself with the projects so earnestly pressed upon him of revolutionising Piedmont, he grasped the fortresses, and thereby laid the foundation for all his subsequent conquests. Without the surrender of the Piedmontese citadels, he would not have been able to push his advantages in Italy beyond the Po ; but for the bastions of Mantua, he might

have carried them, as in the succeeding campaign, to the Danube.

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161.

Degraded
state of the
Italians at
this period.

It is melancholy to reflect on the degraded state of the powers of Italy during this terrible struggle. An invasion which brought on all her people unheard-of calamities, which overspread her plains with bloodshed, and exposed her cities to rapine, was unable to excite the spirit of her pacific inhabitants; and neither of the contending parties deemed it worth their while to bestow a serious thought on the dispositions or assistance of the twenty millions of men who were to be the reward of the strife. The country of Cæsar and Scipio, of Cato and Brutus, beheld in silent dismay the protracted contest of two provinces of its ancient empire, and prepared to bow the neck in abject submission to whichever of its former vassals might prove victorious in the strife. A division of the French army was sufficient to disperse the levies of the Roman people. Such is the consequence of political divisions and long-continued prosperity, even in the richest and most favoured countries; of that fatal policy which withers the spirits of men by fettering their ambition; of that indulgence of the selfish passions which ends in annihilating the generous; and of that thirst for pleasure which subverts the national independence by destroying the warlike spirit by which alone it can be maintained.

Finally, this campaign evinced, in the most signal manner, the persevering character and patriotic spirit of the Austrian people, and the prodigious efforts of which its monarchy is capable, when roused by real danger to vigorous exertion. It is impossible to contemplate, without admiration, the vast armies which they successively sent into the field, and the unconquerable courage with which these returned to a contest where so many thousands of their countrymen had perished before them. Had they been guided by greater, or opposed by less ability, they unquestionably would have been successful; and even against the soldiers of the Army of Italy, and the genius

162.

Unconquer-
able tenacity
of the Aus-
trians.

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1797.

of Napoleon, the scales of fortune repeatedly hung equal. A nation capable of such sacrifices can hardly ever be permanently subdued; a government, actuated by such steady principles, must ultimately be triumphant. Such, accordingly, has been the case in the present instance. Aristocratic firmness in the end asserted its wonted superiority over democratic vigour; the dreams of republican equality were forgotten, but the Austrian government remained unchanged; the French eagles retired over the Alps; and Italy, the theatre of so much bloodshed, finally belonged to the successors of the Cæsars.

CHAPTER XXI.

CAMPAIGN OF 1796 IN GERMANY.

WHEN the Directory was called, by the suppression of the insurrection of the Sections, and the establishment of the new constitution, to the helm of the state, they found the Republic in a very critical situation, and its affairs, externally and internally, involved in almost insurmountable difficulties. The finances were in a state of increasing and inextricable confusion ; the assignats, which had for long constituted the sole resource of government, had fallen almost to nothing ; ten thousand francs in paper were hardly worth twenty francs in specie, and the unbounded depreciation of that species of circulation seemed to render the establishment of any other circulating medium of the same description impossible. The taxes for many years back had been so ill paid, that Ramel, the minister of finance, estimated the arrears in his department at fifteen hundred millions in specie, or above £60,000,000 sterling. The armies, destitute of pay, ill equipped, worse clothed, were discontented ; and the recent disasters on the Rhine had completely broken the susceptible spirit of the French soldiers. The artillery and cavalry were without horses ; the infantry, depressed by suffering and dejected by defeat, were deserting in great numbers, and seeking a refuge in their homes from the toils and the miseries of war.¹ The contest in la Vendée was still unextinguished ; the Republican armies had been driven with disgrace behind the

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1796.

1.

Great difficulties of the French government at the commencement of this year.

¹ Jom. viii.
22. Toul.
vi. 9.

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1796.

2.
But her
foreign re-
lations had
greatly im-
proved.

Rhine, and the troops in the Maritime Alps, worn out with privations, could not be relied on with certainty for offensive operations.

But, on the other hand, the external relations of the Republic had eminently improved ; and the vast exertions of 1794, even though succeeded by the lassitude and weakness of 1795, had produced a most important effect on the relative situation of the belligerent powers. Spain, defeated and humiliated, had sued for peace ; and her accession to the treaty of Bâle, by liberating the armies of the Eastern and Western Pyrenees, had enabled the French government both to reinforce the armies of la Vendée, and to afford means to the young Conqueror of the Sections of carrying the Republican standards into the plains of Lombardy. Prussia had retired, without either honour or advantage, from the struggle ; the Low Countries were not only subdued, but their resources were turned against the Allied powers ; and the whole weight of the contest on the Rhine, it was plain, must now fall on the Austrian monarchy. Britain, baffled and disgraced on the Continent, was not likely to take any effective part in military warfare ; and there seemed little doubt that the power which had recently defeated all the coalesced armies of Europe would be able to subdue the brave but now unaided forces of the Imperialists.

3.
Triple alli-
ance of
Great Bri-
tain, Russia,
and Austria.
27th Sept.
1795.

Aware of the coming danger, Mr Pitt had, in the September preceding, concluded a triple alliance between Great Britain, Austria, and Russia : but the forces of Russia were too far distant, and the danger to its possessions too remote, to permit any material aid to be early acquired from its immense resources. It was not till a later period, and till the fire had fastened on its own vitals, that the might of this gigantic power was effectually roused, and the legions of the North brought to reassert their wonted superiority over the forces of Southern Europe.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
4. Ann.
Reg. 1796,
1798.

The condition of Great Britain, in the close of 1795 and

the beginning of 1796, was nearly as distracted, so far as opinion went, as that of France. The continued disasters of the war, the pressure of new and increasing taxation, the apparent hopelessness of continuing the struggle with a military power which all the armies of Europe had proved unable to subdue, not only gave new strength and vigour to the Whig party, who had all along opposed hostilities, but induced many thoughtful men, who had concurred at first in the necessity of combating the revolutionary mania, to hesitate as to any further continuance of the contest. So violent had party-spirit become, and so completely had it usurped the place of patriotism or reason, that many of the popular leaders had come to wish anxiously for the triumph of their enemies. It was no longer a simple disapprobation of the war which they felt, but a fervent desire that it might terminate to the disadvantage of their country, and that the Republican might triumph over the British arms. They thought that there was no chance of parliamentary reform being carried, or any considerable addition to democratic power acquired, unless the ministry were dispossessed; and, to accomplish this object, they hesitated not to betray their wish for the success of the inveterate enemy of their country. These animosities produced their usual effect of rendering the moderate or rational equally odious to both parties; whoever deplored the war was reputed a foe to his country; whoever pronounced it necessary was deemed a conspirator against its liberty, and an abettor of arbitrary power.¹

These ill humours, which were afloat during the whole of the summer of 1795, broke out into acts of open violence in the autumn of that year. The associations for the purpose of obtaining parliamentary reform increased in boldness and activity: among them were many emissaries of the French government, and numbers of natives of this country, who had thrown off all connexion with it in their hearts, and were become its most violent and

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1796.

4.
Painful
division of
opinion in
England on
the war.¹ Ann. Reg.
1795-6-7.5.
Violence of
the parties
in the close
of 1795.

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1796.

rancorous enemies. They deluded immense bodies of men by the seducing language of freedom which they used, and the alluring prospect of peace which they held forth. Societies having these captivating advantages for their professed objects were generally formed in the great towns; and, under the banner of reform, succeeded in assembling, in every quarter, all that ambition had which was reckless, with all that indigence could collect which was desperate. These causes of discontent were increased by the high price of provisions, the natural consequence of the increased consumption and enlarged circulating medium required in the war; but which the lower orders, under the instigation of their demagogues, ascribed entirely to the ministry, and the crusade which they had undertaken against the liberties of mankind.

6.
Attempts to
assassinate
the King.
29th Oct.
1795.

It was fortunate, at this crisis, that the rural population everywhere remained firm, and that the seditious movements were confined chiefly to the excitable population of the commercial towns; but in them it assumed a most formidable character. At length, on occasion of the King's going to parliament, at its opening, on 29th October 1795, these discontents broke out into open outrages of the most disgraceful kind. The royal carriage was surrounded by an immense crowd of turbulent persons, loudly demanding peace, and the dismissal of Mr Pitt. One of the windows was broken by a pebble, or bullet from an air-gun; showers of stones were thrown at the state-coach, both going and returning from parliament; and the monarch narrowly escaped the fury of the populace in his way from St James's Palace to Buckingham House. These outrages, however, tended only to strengthen the hands of government, by demonstrating to all reasonable men to what excesses the populace would speedily be driven if not restrained by a firm hand, and how slight was the barrier which separated this country from the horrors of the French Revolution.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1796, 8-11.

In debating on the address, Mr Fox maintained that

the representations of ministers were false and delusive; that £100,000,000 had already been added to the national debt, and £4,000,000 a-year to the permanent taxes; that the coalition had been everywhere defeated, and the French were preparing to invade Italy with a powerful army; that the example of America proved how fallacious was the hope, that a nation resolved to be free could be reduced to extremity by the mere failure of pecuniary resources; that the alleged danger of concluding peace with a revolutionary power had been surmounted by the despotic governments of Spain and Prussia, and if so, what peril could arise from it to the constitutional monarchy of England? that we had in truth no allies, but a mere set of mercenary associates, who would abandon our interests the moment that it suited their own convenience; and that the severe scarcity, which now desolated all Europe, seemed to be the consequence of the obstacles to cultivation, which the ravages of war occasioned, and could not be expected to terminate while they continued.¹

On the other hand, it was urged by Mr Pitt, that every consideration, both of justice and policy, called upon us for a vigorous prosecution of the contest; that, notwithstanding his successes in the field, the enemy now began to feel his debility, and had in consequence evinced a disposition toward accommodation, which he never before had done; that the French paper was now at little more than a hundredth part of its nominal value; and though the enormous sum of £750,000,000 worth of assignats had been created, this quantity was hourly on the increase: that it was impossible that a nation reduced to such straits could long support a contest with the formidable enemies who were preparing to assail it by land and sea, and that the system of maintaining war by the heinous method of confiscations and a forced paper currency, however successful for the time, must lead in the end to ruin: that the numbers of the French armies, and the desperate spirit by which

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XXI.

1796.

7.
Arguments
of the Oppo-
sition on the
war.¹ Ann. Reg.
12. Parl.
Hist. xxxii.
1012, 1016.8.
Answer of
Govern-
ment.

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¹ Ann. Reg.
9-12. Parl.
Hist. xxxii.
1030, 1048.

^{9.}
Real objects
in view by
the different
parties.

they were animated, arose from the misery of the country, the stagnation of industry, and the impossibility of finding subsistence in pacific employments ; but that this system, however successful, when a war of invasion and plunder was carried on, could not be maintained for any length of time, when the French armies were repelled, as they now were on all sides, to their own frontiers, and compelled to subsist on their own resources ; that now, therefore, was the time, when the enemy's breath was so evidently failing, to press him hard on every side, and constrain him to such a peace as might protect Europe from Gallic aggression, and England from republican innovation.¹

Such were the arguments urged in public, both in the House of Lords and Commons, on the policy of continuing the war ; and both Houses, by a great majority, supported the administration—the numbers being, in the Lower House, 240 to 59. But the real motives which influenced both sides were materially different from those stated. It was a domestic war which was really waged ; it was the contest between aristocratic ascendancy and democratic ambition which at bottom divided the country, and excited the fierce and implacable passions by which all classes were animated. The popular party perceived that their chance of success was altogether nugatory while the firm hand which now held the reins continued at the head of affairs, and that, so long as the national spirit was excited by the war with France, the ascendancy of the conservative party might be looked upon as certain : while the adherents to ancient institutions felt that the continuance of the contest at any price was preferable to the flood of democracy with which they would be deluged at its close ; and that, till the excitement created by the French Revolution had subsided, no passion but that for war could be relied on to counteract its effects. Thus, though the ground on which the parties engaged was the expedience of continuing the strife, the object which both had really in view was the form of domestic government ; and the passions which

actuated them, in truth, were the same as those which distracted France and agitated Europe.

To enable government to carry on the war, parliament voted supplies to the amount of £27,500,000, exclusive of the interest of the debt ; and in this was included the enormous sum of £18,000,000 contracted by loan, the annual charge of which was £1,100,000, which was provided for by a considerable addition to the assessed taxes. But the total expenditure of the year amounted to £37,500,000, and the remainder was raised, in spring 1796, by exchequer bills and annuities, to the amount of £13,500,000, which made the total loans of that year £31,500,000. Mr Pitt stated it as a most remarkable circumstance, that in the fourth year of so expensive a war, this large loan was obtained at so low a rate as four and a half per cent ; and, without doubt, it was a signal proof of the profusion of capital and confidence in government which prevailed in Britain. But he forgot the ruinous terms on which the loan was contracted for future years ; that a bond of £100 was given for every £60 advanced, and posterity saddled with the payment of an immense sum which the nation had never received. This observation, how obvious soever, was not then perceived by the ablest persons even of practical habits. No one looked forward to the repayment of the debt, and the nation reposed in fancied security on the moderate annual charge which the loan imposed on the country.¹

Another matter of the highest importance gave rise to the most vehement debates both in the legislature and the country : this was the bills which government introduced for providing additional security to the King's person, and for the prevention of seditious meetings.² No measure had been brought forward by government since the Revolution began, which excited such vehement opposition, both in the legislature and the country, as these celebrated statutes, which were stigmatised by the popular party as the Pitt and Grenville Acts, in order that they might for ever be

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1796.
10.
Supplies
voted by
parliament.

¹ Ann. Reg.
53, 64. App.
108.

11.
Bills against
public meet-
ings. Ar-
guments
against these
statutes.

² 36 Geo.
III. c. 18
and 36.

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1796.

held in execration by the country. By the latter, it was required that notice should be given to the magistrate of any public meeting to be held on political subjects ; he was authorised to be present, and empowered to seize those guilty of sedition on the spot ; and a second offence against the act was punishable with transportation. On the part of the Opposition it was urged, that meetings held under such restrictions, and with the dread of imprisonment hanging over the speakers for any word which might escape from them in the heat of debate, could never be considered as the free and unbiassed meetings of Englishmen ; that so violent an infringement had never been attempted on the liberties of the people since the days of the Tudors ; that if the times were so far changed that British subjects could no longer meet and deliberate on public affairs without endangering the state, it would be better at once to surrender their liberties, as in Denmark, into the hands of a despotic sovereign ; that it was evident, however, that there really was no such danger as was apprehended, but the alarm was only a pretence to justify the adoption of arbitrary measures ; that it was in vain to appeal to the example of France, as vindicating the necessity of such rigorous enactments : everybody knew that the Revolution in that country was not owing to Jacobin clubs, or the meetings of the people, but to the corruptions of the court, and the vices of the political system ; and if this bill should pass, the people of this country, rendered desperate by the imposition of similar fetters, would, without all doubt, break out, in their own defence, into similar excesses.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
22, 27.
Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 24,
37.

12.
Arguments
in favour of
them by the
Administra-
tion.

On the other hand it was argued by the Administration, that it was necessary to consider the bill attentively before representing it in such odious colours ; that it imposed restrictions only on public assemblies, and left unfettered the press, the great palladium of liberty in every representative monarchy ; that public meetings required to be narrowly watched in turbulent times,

because it was in such great assemblages that the passions took fire, and men were precipitated by mutual excitement into violent measures ; that the great danger of such meetings arose from the fact, that only one side was heard, and extravagant sentiments were always those which gained most applause ; that the object of the meetings against which these enactments were levelled, was notorious, being nothing less than the overthrow of the monarchy, and the formation of a republican constitution similar to that established with such disastrous effects in France ; that the proposed enactments were certainly a novelty in this country, but so also was the democratic spirit against which they were levelled, and extraordinary times required extraordinary remedies ; and that no danger was to be apprehended to public freedom, as long as the press was unfettered, and juries regarded with so much jealousy as they now did all the measures which emanated from the authority of government.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
23, 32. Parl.
Hist. xxxiii.
49, 62.

The latter bill passed the House of Commons by a majority of two hundred and fourteen to forty-two, and the House of Lords by sixty-six to seven. So exasperated were the Opposition with the success of ministers on this occasion, that Mr Fox, and a large part of the minority, withdrew altogether for a considerable time from the House—a ruinous measure, dictated by spite and disappointment, and which should never, on any similar occasion, be repeated by true patriots. The bill was limited in its duration to three years ; and, after passing both Houses, it received the royal assent. On coolly reviewing the subject of such vehement contention in the parliament and the nation, it is impossible to deny that it is beset with difficulties ; and that nothing but the manifest danger of the times could have furnished an excuse for so wide a deviation from the principles of British freedom. At the same time it is evident that the bills, limited as they were in their duration, and partial

13.
The bills
pass into
laws, and
Opposition
withdraw
in disgust.

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¹ Ann. Reg.
46.14.
Reflections
on these
measures.

in their operation, were not calculated to produce the mischiefs which their opponents so confidently predicted. The proof of this is decisive: the bills were passed, and the liberties of England not only remained entire, but have since that time continually gone on increasing.¹

In truth, the management of a country which has become infected with the contagion of democratic ambition, is one of the most difficult matters in government, and one of which the principles are only now beginning to be understood. It is always to be recollected, that the formidable thing in periods of agitation, and that against which governments are, in an especial manner, called to raise a barrier, is not the discontent arising from real grievance, but the passion springing from popular ambition. The first, being founded in reason and justice, is easily dealt with; it subsides with the removal of the causes which called it forth, and strong measures are very seldom required or justifiable for its suppression. The second, being a vehement passion, arising often from no real evil, but awakened by the anticipation of power, is insatiable; it increases with every gratification it receives, and conducts the nation, through blood and suffering, by a sure and rapid progress, to military despotism. The same danger to freedom is to be apprehended from the prevention of the expression of real suffering, as from concession to democratic ambition. Reform and redress are the remedies suited to the former; resistance and firmness the regimen adapted to the latter. In considering, therefore, whether the measures of Mr Pitt at that period were justifiable or not, the question is, did the public discontents arise from the experience of real evils, or the contagion of democratic ambition? And when it is recollected from what example, in the neighbouring kingdom, these passions were excited, how much the liberties of England have subsequently augmented, and what a career of splendour and prosperity has since been opened, it is evident that

no rational doubt can any longer be entertained on the subject. The event has proved, that no more danger to freedom is to be apprehended from concession than from resistance in such circumstances—for British liberty has since that time steadily increased, under all the coercion applied by a firm government to its excesses: while French enthusiasm led to no practical protection of the people; and the nation fell under a succession of despots, all equally fatal to real freedom, in the vain endeavour to establish a chimerical equality.

Previous to the opening of the campaign of 1796, the British government, in order to bring the French Directory to the test, authorised their agent in Switzerland, Mr Wickham, to make advances to the French minister on the subject of a general peace. The Directory replied, that they could only treat on the footing of the constitution—in other words, that they must insist on retaining the Low Countries. This at once brought matters to an issue, for neither Austria nor Britain were as yet sufficiently humbled to consent to such terms. The declaration of this resolution, however, on the part of the Directory, was of great service to the British cabinet, by demonstrating the impossibility of treating, without abandoning all the objects of the war, and putting France permanently in possession of a salient angle, from which it threatened the liberties of all Europe, and which experience has proved cannot be left in its hands, without exposing them to imminent hazard. Mr Pitt accordingly announced the resolution of the Directory to the British parliament, and immediately obtained further supplies for carrying on the war—an additional loan, as already mentioned, of £7,500,000 was negotiated, upon as favourable terms as the preceding one; and exchequer bills, to the amount of £6,000,000 more, were put at the disposal of government, out of which £3,000,000 were granted to Austria.¹

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15.
Proposals
for peace by
the British
government,
which are
rejected by
the Direc-
tory.
8th March.

Feb. 15 and
April 19.
¹ Ann. Reg.
App. 108.
Th. viii. 200,
201. Jom.
viii. 8.

The first active operations of this memorable year took

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1796.

16.

Operations
of Hoche in
la Vendée.
His charac-
ter.

place in la Vendée, where the Republican general, HOCHÉ, commanded an army of a hundred thousand men. This vast force, the greatest which the Republic had on foot, composed of all the troops in the west of France, and those drawn from Biscay and the western Pyrenees, was intrusted to a general of twenty-seven years of age, whose absolute power extended over all the insurgent provinces. He was in every respect qualified for the important but difficult duty with which he was charged. Endowed by nature with a clear judgment, an intrepid character, and an unconquerable resolution ; firm, sagacious, and humane, he was eminently characterised by that mixture of gentleness and resolution which is necessary to heal the wounds and subdue the passions of civil war. This rare combination of civil and military qualities might have rendered him a formidable rival of Napoleon, and possibly endangered the public peace, had he not united to these shining parts a patriotic heart and a love of liberty which rendered him superior to all temptation, and made him more likely, had he lived, to have followed the example of Washington, than to have trodden in the footsteps of Cæsar or Cromwell. But it is more than probable that his independent spirit would never have brooked the usurpation of power by that extraordinary man ; and his great popularity with the army would possibly have given him the means of combating his ambition with success, and prolonging in France for a few years longer than the 18th Brumaire the delusive phantom of republican institutions.¹

¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 436, 438.
(Hoche.)

17.

Early his-
tory of
Hoche.

Lazare Hoche, like all the great warriors of the Revolution, owed his elevation entirely to his own abilities ; but they rendered him one of the most remarkable men whom that convulsion brought forth. He was born on February 24, 1768, at Montreuil, near Versailles, where his father pursued the humble occupation of *garde de chenil* under Louis XV. ; and he made his first entrance into life at the age of fourteen as a supernumerary understrapper in the royal stables. His parents having soon after died, he

would have been utterly destitute but for the assistance of an aunt, a fruit-woman in Versailles, who from time to time supplied him with small sums of money to add to his scanty wages, and buy books, which he literally devoured, by sitting up at night, after his labours in the stables were over. His inclinations prompting him strongly to a military life, he enlisted at the age of sixteen in the Gardes Françaises. While in that service he almost daily mounted extra guards, and engaged in every species of employment he could obtain consistent with his profession, in order to collect money enough to form a little library, to the study of which his whole evenings were devoted. In 1788 he fought a duel in the quarries of Montmartre, on which occasion he received a wound in the face, the scar of which remained through life, and added to his martial appearance. In the following year he was involved in the general and fatal defection of the French Guards; and having now warmly embraced the principles of the Revolution, he entered into the Municipal Guard of Paris, when it was first raised, immediately after the taking of the Bastille, was soon made sergeant-major, from his remarkable skill in his profession, and at length obtained from the minister Clavière a commission as sub-lieutenant.¹

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1796.

¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 436.
(Hoche.)

No sooner had he attained this rank, than he applied himself with the utmost diligence to the study of his profession; and the advantage of this at once appeared at the siege of Thionville. The distinction he there acquired procured for him the command of Dunkirk, threatened in 1793 with an attack by the British under the Duke of York. Hoche powerfully contributed, by the spirit which he infused into the garrison, and the ability with which the sorties were directed, to the defeat of that enterprise, and the overthrow of the covering army under Freytag, at the battle of Hondscote. The highest military honours and employments were now open to him, and he proved himself equal to them all. At the age of twenty-four he

18.
His first rise
to eminence
in the Re-
publican
armies.

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1796.

obtained the command of the army of the Moselle, and he there found antagonists worthy of his powers, in the Duke of Brunswick and the Prussian army ; but such was the vigour and ability of his operations, that, before the close of the campaign, he had driven the Allies entirely out of Alsace. He there, however, underwent a strange mutation of fortune. Having denounced Pichegru as engaged in treasonable correspondence with the enemy, to the Committee of Public Salvation, he incurred the wrath of St-Just, by whom that general was protected, and, in consequence, was deprived of his command, and exiled to Nice. Hardly had he set out to the place of his banishment, when he was arrested by orders of the Committee of Public Salvation, brought to Paris, and thrown into the Conciergerie, from whence he would infallibly have been brought to the scaffold, had not the Revolution of the 9th Thermidor cut short the career of his oppressors. It was then that he gave his hand, as already mentioned, to St-Just, the author of his arrest, as the latter entered the gates of his prison.¹

¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 437.

19.
His captivity, and consequent moral improvement.

The period of his captivity, however, which was very considerable, was of more real service to Hoche than that of his triumphs ; for it taught him to think, and enabled him to gain the mastery of his vehement and fiery temper, to which his misfortunes had in some degree been owing. His marvellous career gave him ample room for reflection ; for, within the space of ten years, and ere he had yet turned his twenty-fifth year, he had been successively an under-strapper in the royal stables, a general-in-chief of one of the greatest armies of the Republic, and a captive at the point of death from the Revolutionary Tribunal. He became, in consequence, grave and silent, thoughtful and reflecting beyond his years ; and he assumed for his maxim the motto, " Things, and not words."² These qualities were all necessary to enable him to achieve the difficult task now committed to him by the Directory, of subduing the western provinces, and terminating the dreadful war,

² Biog. Univ.
xx. 437.
Th. viii. 206,
208.

which in that quarter had so long consumed the vitals of the state.

Hoche's plan, which was approved of by the Directory, was to reduce la Vendée, and all the provinces to the south of the Loire, before making any attempt upon Brittany, or the departments to the north of that river. All the towns in the insurgent district were declared in a state of siege; the Republican army was authorised to maintain itself in the country where hostilities were continued, and to levy the necessary requisitions from the peasantry; and the towns which fell into the possession of the Republicans were to be protected and provided for like captured fortresses. Pardon was proclaimed to all the chiefs who should lay down their arms, while those who continued the contest were ordered to be shot.¹

During the absence of Hoche at Paris, in the depth of winter, arranging this plan with the Directory, the Royalist chiefs, in particular Charette and Stofflet, gained considerable successes; the project of disarming the insurgent provinces had made little progress; and the former of these chiefs, having broken through the line, had appeared in the rear of the Republicans. But the arrival of the general-in-chief restored vigour and unanimity to their operations. Charette was closely pursued by several columns, under the command of General Travot; while Stofflet, cut off from all communication with the other Royalists, was driven back upon the shores of the ocean. As a last resource, Charette collected all his forces, and attacked his antagonist at the passage of la Vie. The Royalists, seized with a sudden panic, did not combat with their accustomed vigour; their ranks were speedily broken; their artillery, ammunition, and sacred standard, all fell into the hands of the enemy; Charette himself with difficulty made his escape, with forty or fifty followers; and, wandering through forests and marshes long after, owed his safety solely to the incorruptible fidelity of the peasants of the Marais. In vain he endeavoured to elude his

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20.

Hoche's
plan of operations.

¹ Biog. Univ.
xx. 437.
Th. viii. 206,
207.

21.

Successes of
Charette
and Stofflet
during the
winter.
Death of
the latter.

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1796.

¹ Jom. viii.
36. Th. viii.
212.

pursuers and join Stofflet: that intrepid chief, himself pressed by the forces of the Republic, after escaping a thousand perils, was betrayed by one of his followers at the farm of Pegrimaud, where he was seized, gagged, and conducted to Angers. He there met death with the same resolution which had distinguished his life.¹

22.
Necessities
of Hoche.

This great success was necessary to establish the credit of the young general, who, accused equally by both parties—by the Royalists of severity, and by the Republicans of moderation—was so beset with difficulties, and so much disgusted with his situation, that he formally demanded his dismissal from the command. But Carnot, aware of his abilities, instead of accepting his resignation, confirmed him in his appointments; and, as a mark of the esteem of government, sent him two fine horses—a present not only highly acceptable, but absolutely necessary to the young general. For though at the head of one hundred thousand men, and master of a quarter of France, he was reduced to such straits, by the fall of the paper in which the whole pay of the army was received, that he was absolutely without horses, or equipage of any kind, and was glad to supply his immediate necessities by taking half-a-dozen bridles and saddles, and a few bottles of rum, from the stores left by the British in Quiberon Bay.²

² Th. viii.
214.23.
Heroic conduct of Charette.

Charette was now the only remaining obstacle to the entire subjugation of the country; for, as long as he lived, it never could be considered as pacified. Anxious to get quit of so formidable an enemy on any terms, the Directory offered him a safe retreat into England with his family and such of his followers as he might select, and a million of francs for his own maintenance. Charette replied—"I am ready to die with arms in my hands; but not to fly, and abandon my companions in misfortune. All the vessels of the Republic would not be sufficient to transport my brave soldiers into England. Far from fearing your menaces, I will myself come to seek you in your own camp." The Royalist officers, who perceived that further resistance had

become hopeless, urged him to retire to Britain, and await a more favourable opportunity of renewing the contest at the head of the princes and nobility of France. "Gentlemen," said he, with a severe air, "I am not here to judge of the orders which my sovereign has given me : I know them ; they are the same which I myself have solicited. Preserve towards them the same fidelity which I shall do ; nothing shall shake me in the discharge of my duty."¹

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XXI.

1796.

¹ Beau-
champ,
Guerres de
la Vendée,
iv. 198, 202.

This indomitable chief, however, could not long withstand the immense bodies which were now directed against him. His band was gradually reduced from seven hundred to fifty, and at last, ten followers. With this handful of heroes he long kept at bay the Republican forces ; but at length, pursued on every side, and tracked out like a wild beast by bloodhounds, he was seized, after a furious combat, and brought, bleeding and mutilated, but unsubdued, to the Republican headquarters. General Travot, with the consideration due to illustrious misfortune, treated him with respect and kindness, but could not avert his fate. He was conducted to Angers, where he was far from experiencing from others the generous treatment of this brave Republican general. Maltreated by the brutal soldiery, dragged along, yet dripping with blood from his wounds, before the populace of the town, weakened by loss of blood, he had need of all his strength of mind to sustain his courage ; but, even in this extremity, his firmness never deserted him. On the 27th March he was removed from the prison of Angers to that of Nantes. He entered the latter town, preceded by a numerous escort, closely guarded by gendarmes and generals glittering in gold and plumes ; himself on foot, with his clothes torn and bloody, pale and attenuated ; yet an object of more interest than all the splendid throng by whom he was surrounded. Such was his exhaustion from loss of blood, that the undaunted chief fainted on leaving the Quarter of Commerce ; but no sooner was his strength revived by a glass of water,

24.
He is at
length taken
prisoner,
and con-
demned to
be shot.

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1796.

than he marched on, enduring for two hours, with heroic constancy, the abuse and imprecations of the populace. He was immediately conducted to the military commission. His examination lasted two hours ; but his answers were all clear, consistent, and dignified—openly avowing his Royalist principles, and resolution to maintain them to the last. Upon hearing the sentence of death, he calmly asked for the succours of religion, which were granted him, and slept peaceably the night before the sentence was carried into effect. On the following morning he was brought out for execution. The rolling of drums, the assembly of all the troops and national guard, a countless multitude of spectators, announced the great event which was approaching. At length the hero appeared, descended with a firm step the stairs of the prison, and walked to the Place des Agriculteurs, where the execution was to take place. A breathless silence prevailed. Charette advanced to the appointed place, bared his breast, took his yet bloody arm out of the scarf, and, without permitting his eyes to be bandaged, himself gave the command, uttering, with his last breath, the words—"Vive le Roi!"¹

¹ Beau. iv. 201, 202.
Lac. xiii. 78, 79. Jom. viii. 39. Th. viii. 216.

25.
His death and character, and observation of Napoleon regarding him.

Thus perished Charette, the last and most indomitable of the Vendean chiefs. His character cannot be better given than in the words of Napoleon :—"Charette," said he, "was a great character ; the true hero of that interesting period of our Revolution which, if it presents great misfortunes, has at least not injured our glory. He left on me the impression of real grandeur of mind ; the traces of no common energy and audacity, the sparks of genius, are apparent in his actions." Though the early massacres which stained the Royalist cause at Machecoul were perpetrated without his orders, yet he had not the romantic generosity, or humane turn of mind, which formed the glorious characteristics of Lescure, Larochejaquelein, and Bonchamp. His mind, cast in a rougher mould, was marked by deeper colours ; and in the later stages of the contest, he executed, without scruple, all the severities

which the terrible war in which he was engaged called forth on both sides. If his jealousy of others was sometimes injurious to the Royal cause, his unconquerable firmness prolonged it after every other chance of success was gone; his single arm supported the struggle when the bravest of his followers were sinking in despair; and he has left behind him the glorious reputation of being alike invincible in resolution, inexhaustible in resources, and unsubdued in disaster. Las Cases has recounted an anecdote of him when in command of a small vessel early in life. "Though regarded as a person of mere ordinary capacity, he, on one occasion, gave proof of the native energy of his mind. While still a youth, he sailed from Brest in his cutter, which, having lost its mast, was exposed to the most imminent danger; the sailors, on their knees, were praying to the Virgin, and totally incapable of making any exertion, till Charette, by killing one, succeeded in bringing the others to a sense of their duty, and thereby saved the vessel. "There!" said Napoleon, "the true character always appears in great circumstances; that was a spark which spoke the future hero of la Vendée. We must not always judge of a character from present appearances: there are slumberers whose rousing is terrible. Kleber was one of them; his wakening was that of the lion."¹

The death of Charette terminated the war in the west of France, and gave more joy to the Republicans than the most brilliant victory over the Austrians. The vast army of Hoche, spread over the whole country from the Loire to the British Channel, gradually pressed upon the insurgent provinces, and drove the peasantry back towards the shores of the ocean. The policy pursued by the Republican general on this occasion was a model of wisdom, worthy the imitation of every government, or commander charged with a similar arduous duty. He took the utmost pains to conciliate the parish priests, who had so powerful an influence over the minds of the people; and as his

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XXI.

1796.

¹ Las Cas.
vii. 104, 105.
Beau. iv.
203. Lac.
xiii. 79. Th.
viii. 217.

26.
Termination of the
war in la
Vendée.

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columns advanced, seized the cattle and grain of the peasantry, leaving at their dwellings a notice that they would be restored to them when they gave up their weapons, but not till then. The consequence was, that the poor people, threatened with famine, if these their only resources were withheld, were compelled universally to surrender their arms. The army, advancing slowly, completed in this way the disarming of the inhabitants as they proceeded, and left nothing in their rear from which danger was to be apprehended. At length they reached the ocean ; and though the most resolute of the insurgent bands fought with the courage of despair when they found themselves driven back to the sea-coast, yet the great work was by degrees accomplished, the country universally disarmed, and the soldiers put into cantonments in the conquered district. The people, weary of a contest from which no hope could now be entertained, at length everywhere surrendered their arms, and resumed their pacific occupations ; the Republicans, cantoned in the villages, lived on terms of friendship with their former enemies ; mutual exasperation subsided, the clergy communicated openly with a leader who had for the first time treated them with sincerity and kindness ; and before the end of the summer, Hoche, instead of requiring new troops, was able to send great reinforcements to the Directory for the support of the armies on the Rhine and in Italy.¹

¹ Th. viii.
218. Jom.
viii. 41, 49.
Biog. Univ.
xx. 433.

27.
Prepara-
tions of
the Aus-
trians. The
Archduke
Charles put
at the head
of the army
in Germany.

Meanwhile the cabinet of Vienna, encouraged by the brilliant achievements of Clairfait at the conclusion of the last campaign, and aware, from the incorporation of Flanders with the French Republic, that no accommodation was to be hoped for, was making the utmost efforts to prosecute the war with vigour. A new levy of twenty-five thousand men took place in the Hereditary States ; the regiments were universally raised to their full complement ; and every effort was made to turn to advantage the military spirit and numerous population of the newly acquired province of Galicia. Clairfait, the conqueror of

the lines of Mayence, made a triumphal entry into Vienna with unprecedented splendour. But his fame awakened the usual jealousy of courts ; necessity had not yet rendered him indispensable to the public safety ; and the Aulic Council repaid his achievements by the appointment of the Archduke Charles to the command of the armies on the Rhine—a step which, however ill deserved by his gallant predecessor, was soon justified by the great military abilities of the young prince.¹

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1796.

¹ Jom. viii.
51. Th. viii.
307.

The forces of the contending parties on the Rhine were nearly equal ; but the Imperialists had a great superiority in the number and quality of their cavalry. On the Upper Rhine, Moreau commanded seventy thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry ; while Wurmser, who was opposed to him, had sixty-two thousand foot and twenty-two thousand horse ; but before this campaign was far advanced, thirty thousand men were detached from this army to reinforce the broken troops of Beaulieu in Italy. On the Lower Rhine, the Archduke was at the head of seventy-one thousand infantry and twenty-one thousand cavalry ; while the army of the Sambre and Meuse, under Jourdan, numbered sixty-eight thousand of the former arm, and eleven thousand of the latter. The disproportion between the numerical strength on the opposite sides, therefore, was not considerable ; but the superiority of the Germans in the number and quality of their horse gave them a great advantage in an open country, both in profiting by success and arresting disaster. This advantage, however, was more than compensated to the French by their possession of the fortresses on the Rhine, the true base of offensive operations in Germany. They held the fortresses of Luxemburg, Thionville, Metz, and Saarelouis, which rendered the centre of their position almost unassailable ; their right was covered by Huningen, New Brisach, and the fortresses of Alsace, and their left by Maestricht, Juliers, and the iron barrier of the Netherlands ;² while the Austrians had no fortified point whatever.

28.
Forces of
the contend-
ing parties
on the
Rhine.

² Archduke,
ii. 10, 12.
Jom. viii.
170. Th.
viii. 306,
307.

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to support either of their wings. This want, in a war of invasion, is of incalculable importance ; and the event soon proved that the fortresses of the Rhine are not less valuable as a base for offensive, than as a barrier to support defensive operations.

29.
Plans of the
Austrians.

31st May.

The plan of the Aulic Council was, in the north to force the passage of the Moselle, carry the war into Flanders, and rescue that flourishing province from the grasp of the Republicans. For this purpose they had brought the greater mass of their forces to the Lower Rhine. On the Upper, they proposed to lay siege to Landau, and, having driven the Republicans over the mountains on the west of the valley of the Rhine, blockade Strassburg. But for some reason, which has never been divulged, they remained in a state of inactivity until the end of May ; while Beaulieu, with fifty thousand men, was striving in vain to resist the torrent of Napoleon's conquests in Lombardy. The consequences of this delay proved fatal to the whole campaign. Hardly was the armistice denounced in the end of May, when an order arrived to Wurmser to detach twenty-five thousand of his best troops by the Tyrolese Alps into Italy—a deduction which, by necessarily reducing the Imperialists on the Upper Rhine to the defensive, rendered it hardly possible for the Archduke to push forward the other army towards the Moselle. There still remained, however, one hundred and fifty thousand Imperialists on the frontiers of Germany, including above forty thousand superb cavalry—a force which, if earlier brought into action, and placed under one leader, might have changed the fate of the war. The French inferiority in horse was compensated by a superiority of twenty thousand foot-soldiers. The Austrians had the immense advantage of possessing two fortified places, Mayence and Mannheim, on the Rhine, which gave them the means of debouching with equal facility on either side of that stream ; while the Republicans only held a *tête-du-pont* at

Düsseldorf, so far removed to the north as to be of little service in commencing operations. The events of this struggle demonstrate, in the most striking manner, the great importance of early success in war, and by what a necessary chain of consequences an inconsiderable advantage at first often determines the fate of a campaign. A single victory gained by the Austrians on the Saare or the Moselle would have compelled the French armies to break up in order to garrison the frontier towns; and the Directory, to defend its own territories, would have been obliged to arrest the career of Napoleon in the Italian plains; while, by taking the initiative, and carrying the war into Germany, they were enabled to leave their fortresses defenceless, and swell, by the garrisons of these, the invading force, which soon proved so perilous to the Austrian monarchy.¹

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1796.

¹ Jom. viii.
173. Arch.
Charles, ii.
201.

The plan of the Republicans was to move forward the army of the Sambre and Meuse by Düsseldorf, to the right bank of the Rhine, in order to threaten the communication of the Archduke with Germany, induce him to recross it, and facilitate the passage of the upper part of the stream by Moreau. In conformity with this design, KLEBER,*

30.
Plan of the
Republicans.

* Jean Baptiste Kleber was born at Strassburg in 1754. His father was a domestic in the service of Cardinal Rohan, who became so notorious in connexion with the affair of the diamond necklace; and he was at first destined for the profession of an architect, for which he evinced a considerable turn. One day at Paris, when pursuing his studies, he saw two foreigners insulted by some young men in a coffee-house; he took their part, and extricated them from the attack: in return, they offered to take him with them to Munich, to which city they belonged, and place him in the Military Academy there. The offer was too tempting to be resisted; the study of architecture was exchanged for the career of arms; and such was the progress made by the young student in his military studies, that General Kaunitz, son of the celebrated minister of the same name, invited him to Vienna, and soon after gave him a commission as sub-lieutenant in his regiment. He remained in the Austrian service from 1776 to 1785, and made his first essay in arms against the Turks; but, disgusted at length with a service in which promotion was awarded only to birth, he resigned his commission, returned to France, resumed his profession of an architect, and obtained the situation of inspector of public edifices at Bèfort, which he held for six years.

Early history
of Kleber.

The Revolution, however, called him to very different destinies. In a revolt at Bèfort, in 1791, he espoused the cause of the populace, whom he headed, and defeated the regiment of Royal-Louis, which strove to suppress the tumult. This incident determined his future career; retreat was im-

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1796.

31

They cross
the Lower
Rhine, and
gain some
success.
June 4.

¹ Jom. viii.
182, and
Pièces Just.
No. 12. Th.
viii. 308.
Ney, i. 155.
177. Arch.
Ch. ii. 64,
74.

on the 30th May, crossed the Rhine at Düsseldorf, and, with twenty-five thousand men, began to press the Austrians on the Sieg, where the Archduke had only twenty thousand—the great bulk of his army, sixty thousand strong, being on the left bank, in front of Mayence.

The Republicans succeeded in defeating the advanced posts of the Imperialists, crossed the Sieg, turned the position of Ukerath, and drove them back to Altenkirchen. There the Austrians stood firm, and a severe action took place. General NEY, with a body of light troops, turned their left, and threatened their communications; while Kleber, having advanced through the hills of Weyersbusch, assailed their front; and SOULT* menaced their reserve at Kropach. The result of these movements was, that the Austrians were driven behind the Lahn at Limburg, with the loss of fifteen hundred prisoners and twelve pieces of cannon.¹

possible: he had now no chance of safety but in advancing with the Revolution. In 1792 he entered as a private into a regiment of volunteers of the Upper Rhine, in which his lofty stature, martial air, fearless demeanour, and previous acquaintance with war, soon gained him consideration, and elevated him to the rank of adjutant-major, in which capacity he acted for some time under General Custine. When that officer was brought to trial, he had the courage to do what, in those days, required stronger nerves than to face a battery of cannon,—to give evidence in his favour. The known vehemence of his Republican principles preserved him from the destruction which otherwise would have awaited him for that courageous act; and he was soon after sent as general of brigade to la Vendée, where his talents and intrepidity were experienced with fatal effect by the Royalist forces. His able conduct mainly contributed to the victories of Chollet, Mans, and Savenay, which proved so fatal to the Vendean cause. After having made a triumphant entry into Nantes, and in effect finished the war, he was removed from his command, in consequence of the undisguised manner in which he expressed his abhorrence of the sanguinary cruelties with which the Committee of Public Salvation desolated the country after the contest was over. His unrestrained freedom of speech long prevented Kleber's promotion, as it does in every age that of really great men. Every government, monarchical, aristocratic, or republican, seeks for pliant talent, not lofty intellect. The disasters of the Republic, however, at length rendered his employment indispensable, and he received a command as general of division, in which capacity he bore a part in the battle of Fleurus, and in all the subsequent operations of the army of the Sambre and Meuse in 1795, down to the crossing of the Rhine by Jourdan in spring 1796.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxii. 460, 462, (KLEBER.)

* Jean de Dieu Soult, afterwards Marshal of France and Duke of Dalmatia, Early history was born at St Amans, in the department of Tarn, on the 29th March 1769, just a month before his great rival Wellington, and in the same year with

This victory produced the desired effect, by drawing the Archduke, with the greater part of his forces, across the Rhine, to succour the menaced points. On the 10th he passed that river with thirty-two battalions and eighty squadrons, arrived in the neighbourhood of Limburg four days after, and moved, with forty-five thousand infantry and eighteen thousand cavalry, against the Republicans on the German side. Jourdan, upon this, leaving Marceau with twenty thousand men near Mayence, crossed the Rhine at Neuwied with the bulk of his forces, to support Kleber. His intention was to cover the investment of Ehrenbreitstein, and, for this purpose, to pass the Lahn and attack Wartensleben, who commanded the advanced guard of the Imperialists; but the Archduke, resolved to take the initiative, anticipated him by a day, and commenced an attack with all his forces. The position of the Republicans was in the highest degree critical, as they were

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32.

They are
driven back
across the
Rhine by
the Arch-
duke.

16th June.

Lannes, Ney, and so many other of the heroes of the Revolution. Descended of humble parents, he entered the army in 1785 as a private in the 23d Royal Infantry: but his intelligence and quickness having early made him conspicuous, he was appointed, in 1791, drill-sergeant to a battalion of volunteers who had been raised on the Upper Rhine, and afterwards received from Marshal Luckner his commission as sub-lieutenant in the same regiment. His talents ere long led to his being employed in important duties. He was chosen captain by the soldiers by acclamation, and soon intrusted by Custine with the command of two battalions. He was distinguished at the battle of Kaiserslautern, at the storming of the lines of Weissenburg, and the siege of Fort Louis; but it was at the battle of Fleurus that he first gave proof of his undaunted character. The brave Marceau there found himself deserted by his troops, who were flying in the utmost disorder towards the Sambre, leaving the right of the army entirely uncovered. In despair, he was about to rush into the thickest of the fight, and seek death from the enemy's bayonets. At that instant Soult, breathless, came up. "You would die, Marceau," said the future antagonist of Wellington, "and leave your soldiers dishonoured: fly and seek them; bring them back to the charge; it will be more glorious to conquer with them." Marceau, struck with these words, followed his men, succeeded in rallying them, and led them back to share in the ultimate glories of the day.

After this he took part in the actions on the Ourthe and the Roer, at the conclusion of the campaign of 1794, and was engaged in the blockade of Luxembourg till the surrender of that place. During the chequered campaign of 1795, he commanded a light division of three battalions and five squadrons, which rendered essential service, both in the advanced guard during forward, and the rear-guard in retrograde movements. In the course of one of these, he was suddenly enveloped near Herborn by four thousand Austrian cavalry. Summoned to surrender to this vast superiority of horse, he set the enemy at

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compelled to fight with the Rhine on their right flank, and between them and France, which would have exposed them to utter ruin in case of a serious reverse. The Archduke judiciously brought the mass of his forces against the French left, and, having overwhelmed it, Jourdan was compelled to draw back all his troops to avoid being driven into the river, and completely destroyed amidst its precipitous banks. He accordingly retired to Neuwied, and recrossed the Rhine, while Kleber received orders to retire to Düsseldorf, and regain the left bank. Kray pursued him with the right wing of the Austrians, and a bloody and furious action ensued at Ukerath, which at length terminated to the disadvantage of the French, in consequence of the impetuous charges of the Imperial cavalry. Kleber continued his retreat, and regained the intrenched camp around the *tête-de-pont* at Düsseldorf.¹

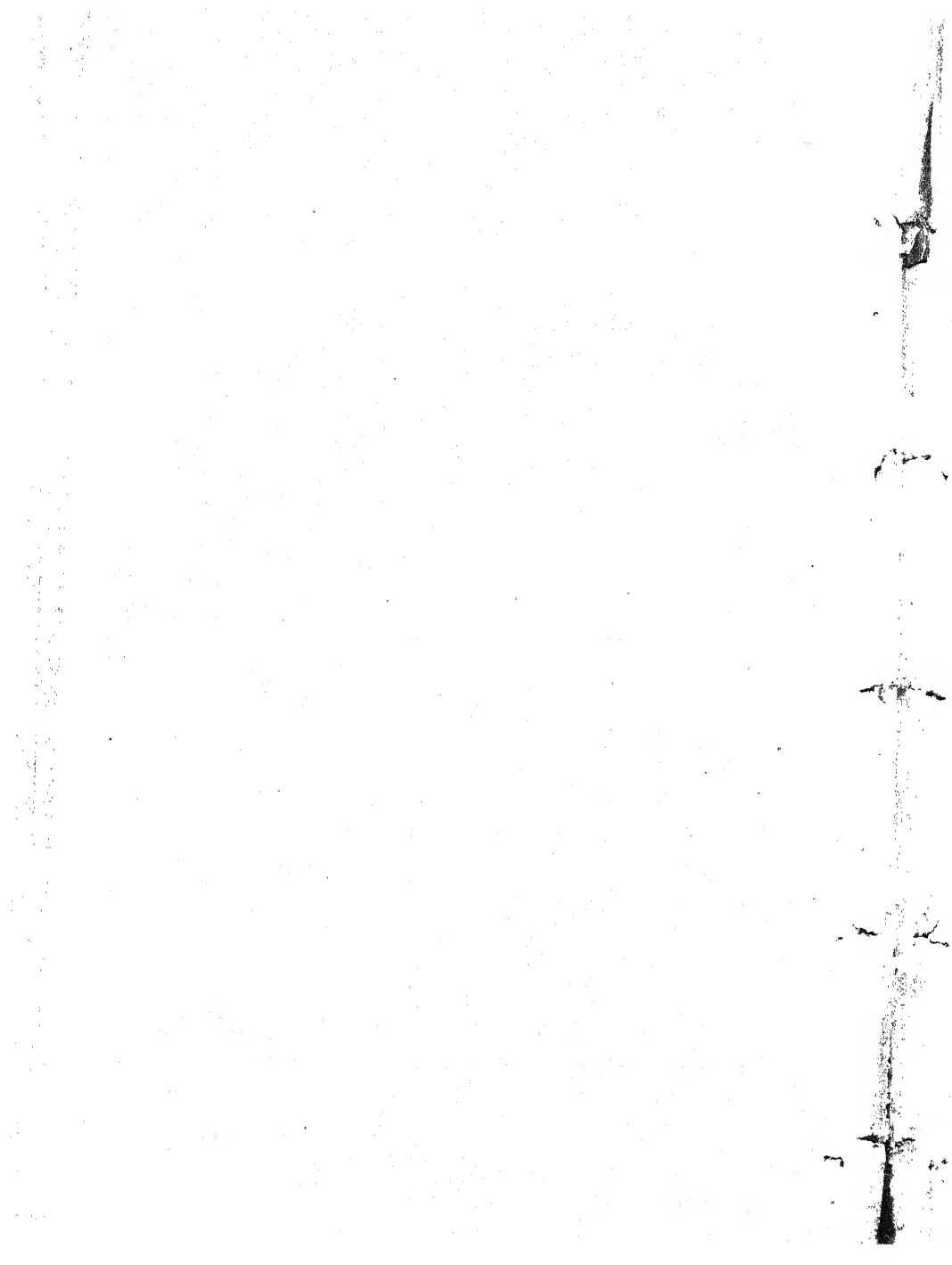
¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 74, 92.
Jom. viii.
185, 194.
Th. viii. 309.
Ney, 180,
197.

33.
Early his-
tory of
Moreau.

Meanwhile the army on the Upper Rhine, under the command of MOREAU, had commenced offensive operations. This great general, born in 1763, at Morlaix, in Brittany, was the son of a respectable advocate in that town, and had been originally bred to the bar. While yet engaged in that profession, he was appointed *Prévôt-de-droit* at Rennes, in which situation his solid talents, great acquirements, and courteous manners, gave him an entire ascendant over the students of law in that provincial capital, who styled him, in 1787, on occasion of its contest with the crown, "General of the Parliament." Tempering at the same time prudence with firmness, he defiance, formed his infantry in two close columns, with the cavalry in the interval between them, and in that order marched five hours, constantly fighting, in the course of which he repulsed no less than seven charges without being ever broken, or losing a gun or a standard, until he rejoined in safety the ranks of his countrymen. After ten days' repose he was again in motion, commanded in the combat of Ratte-Eig, fought on the summit of a lofty ridge then knee-deep in snow, where he inflicted a loss on the enemy of two thousand men, and took part in the battle of Friedberg, to the success of which his skill and valour powerfully contributed. His name will be found connected with almost all the great triumphs of Napoleon; and his glorious defence of the south of France against Wellington, in 1813 and 1814, have secured for him a place in the very first rank of military glory.—See *Biographie des Contemporains*, xix. 255, 257, (SOULT.)



W. O. L. M. A. D.



succeeded in calming the effervescence of the young men, and subduing a revolt which otherwise might have been attended with serious consequences. When the Revolution broke out, he organised a company of artillery volunteers, of which he was elected captain. Weary of pacific service, and finding the legal profession wholly destroyed by the public convulsions, he solicited a situation, in 1792, in the gendarmerie or *mounted police*. Happily his application was unsuccessful; and, having soon after enlisted in a regiment of the line, he made his debut in war under Dumourier, in the campaign of Flanders in 1793. His intelligence and sagacity speedily occasioned his promotion: he was raised by the suffrages of the soldiers to the rank of colonel; before the end of the campaign he was a brigadier-general: and in the following year, on the recommendation of Pichegru, he was appointed general of division, and intrusted with an important command in the maritime districts of Flanders. There, after various lesser successes, he succeeded in planting the Republican standards on the important fort of Ecluse on the Scheldt.¹

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1796.

¹Biog. Univ.
xxx. 86.
(Moreau.)

At the moment that Moreau was rendering these important services to France, the Jacobins of Brest sent his father to the scaffold. That respectable old man, who, by his beneficence to the unfortunate in Morlaix, where he resided, had gained the surname of the "Father of the Poor," had excited the jealousy of the Revolutionists in his province, by his humanity in administering the affairs of some emigrants, who, but for his probity, would have lost their all. This tragic event confirmed his son in the repugnance which he already felt for the atrocities of the Jacobins, and determined him to devote himself exclusively to the career of arms. He commanded the right wing of Pichegru's army in the winter campaign of 1794, which procured for the Republicans the possession of Holland. When that general was transferred from the scene of his Batavian triumphs to the command of the army of the

34.
His first
exploits as
a general.



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34.
His first
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a general.

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1796.

Rhine and Moselle, Moreau received the command in chief of the army of Holland; and, by the wisdom and justice of his administration, attracted universal esteem—the more so, as it exhibited such a contrast to the universal rapacity and shameless extortions of the commissioners of the Convention. After the dismissal of Pichegru from the command of the army in Alsace, in the winter of 1795, he was appointed his successor; and two traits of his conduct in that campaign, overlooked in the whirl of its important events, deserve to be recorded, as marking at once the probity and generosity of his character. When compelled to retreat by the admirable skill of the Archduke Charles from the heart of Bavaria to the Upper Rhine, he preferred forcing his way sword in hand through the defiles of the Black Forest, occupied by the enemy, to violating the neutrality of the Swiss territory near the lake of Constance, which would have given him the means of a bloodless retreat. And when his rival, Napoleon, was hard pressed by the Austrians under Alvinzi in Italy, he detached a corps across the Tyrolese Alps to reinforce him, sufficient again to chain victory to the standards of the army of Italy. “O Moreau!” said Carnot, on hearing of this—“O my dear Fabius, how great you were in that circumstance! how superior to the wretched rivalries of generals, which so often cause the best-laid enterprises to miscarry!”¹

¹Biog. Univ.
xxx. 87, 88.
(Moreau.)

35.
His character as a
general.

Moreau was the most consummate general who appeared in the French armies in that age of glory. Without the eagle glance or vehement genius of Napoleon, he was incomparably more judicious and circumspect: he never could have made the campaign of Italy in 1796, or in Champagne in 1814; but neither would he have incurred the disasters of the Moscow retreat, nor lost his crown by the obstinacy of his grasp of Spain. More closely than any general in the Revolutionary wars he resembled Marlborough. He had all his prudence, circumspection, and skill in war; but he wanted the knowledge of men and incomparable address which rendered the

English hero equally great in the cabinet as in the field. Like Fabius, Epaminondas, and Turenne, he trusted nothing to chance, laid his plans with consummate ability, and, calculating with equal precision the probabilities of success or disaster, often succeeded in achieving the former without incurring the latter. But he was great as a general alone—as a man he was only good. He had no turn for political affairs, and was wholly unfit to be the head of a party. Gifted with rare sagacity, an imperturbable coolness in presence of danger, and a rapid *coup-d'œil*, in the field of battle, he was eminently qualified for military success; but his modesty, indecision of mind, and retiring habits, rendered him unfit to cope in political life with the energy and ambition of Napoleon. He was, accordingly, illustrious as a general, but unfortunate as a statesman: a sincere republican, he disdained to accept elevation at the expense of the public freedom; and, after vanquishing the Imperialists at Hohenlinden, he sank before the audacity and fortune of his younger and less scrupulous rival.¹

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¹ Th. viii.
307, 310.
Jom. viii.
169, 195.
Arch. Ch.
ii. 19. Biog.
Univ. xxx.
90, 91.

On arriving at the command, after the dismissal of Pichegru, he applied himself assiduously, with the aid of Reynier, to reorganise and restore the army, whose spirit the disasters of the preceding campaign had considerably weakened. The French centre, thirty thousand strong, cantoned at the foot of the Vosges Mountains, was placed under the orders of DESAIX; * the left, under St-

36.
Organisa-
tion of his
army.

* Louis Charles Desaix was born at St-Hilaire in 1768, of a noble family. At the age of fifteen he entered the regiment of Bretagne, and was soon distinguished by his severe and romantic character. In 1791, he was appointed aide-de-camp to General Victor de Broglie. His first action in the Revolutionary army was in the combat of Lautterburg, 1793, in which his heroic courage was so conspicuous, that it procured for him rapid promotion. In 1796, he commanded one of Moreau's divisions. "Of all the generals I ever had under me," said Napoleon, "Desaix and Kleber possessed the greatest talents—especially Desaix, as Kleber only loved war as it was the means of procuring him riches and pleasures; whereas Desaix loved glory for itself, and despised everything else. Desaix was wholly wrapt up in war and glory. To him riches and pleasures were valueless, nor did he give them a moment's thought. He despised comfort and convenience; wrapt in a cloak, he threw himself under a gun, and slept as contentedly as in a palace. Upright and honest in all his proceedings, he was called by the Arabs the Just Sultan. Kleber and Desaix were an irreparable loss to the French army."—O'MEARA, i. 237, 238; and *Biog. Univ.* xi. 123, (DESAIX.)

Early history
of Desaix.

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CYR,* had its headquarters at Deuxponts; while the right, under Moreau in person, occupied Strassburg and Huningen. The Austrians, in like manner, were in three divisions; the right wing, twenty-two thousand strong, was encamped in the neighbourhood of Kayserslautern, and communicated with the Archduke Charles: the centre, under the orders of Starray, amounting to twenty-three thousand infantry and nine thousand horse, was at Muschbach and Mannheim; while the left wing, comprehending twenty-four thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry, extended along the course of the Rhine from Philipsburg to Bâle. Thus, notwithstanding all their misfortunes, the Imperialists still adhered to the ruinous system of extending their forces—a plan of operations destined to bring about all but the ruin of the monarchy.¹

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 24. Jom.
viii. 196,
197. St-
Cyr, iii. 33,
37.

37.
Passage of
the Rhine by
Moreau.

Moreau resolved to pass the Rhine at Strassburg, as that powerful fortress was an excellent point of departure; while the numerous wooded islands, which there interrupted the course of the river, afforded every facility for the concealment of the project. The fortress of Kehl, on the opposite shore, being negligently guarded, lay open to surprise, and, once secured, promised the means of a safe passage to the whole army. The Austrians on the Upper Rhine were, from the very beginning of the campaign, reduced to the defensive, in consequence of the large detachment sent under Wurmser to the Tyrol; while

^{*} Laurent Gouvion-St-Cyr, afterwards Marshal and Peer of France, was born at Toul on the 13th April 1761. When called upon to decide upon his profession, he declined the army, to which his father had destined him, on account of the slow promotion and indolent life of the officers in peace, and took to painting, in pursuance of which he travelled to Italy, and studied some years in Rome. Having completed his preparatory education, he returned to Paris, where he began to practise his art in the atelier of the painter Brenel: but the 10th of August soon arrived; the fine arts were forgotten in the whirl of the Revolution: and the young painter, abandoning his pacific pursuits, enrolled himself in one of the numerous corps of volunteers which were then forming in the capital. There he was speedily raised, by the voice of his comrades, to the rank of captain, and sent, in November 1792, to the army of the Lower Rhine, with which he continued to act down to the peace of Campo-Formio. It is to this circumstance that we owe the valuable Memoirs which he has left on that period of the war, and which, published in 1831, accompanied

Early history
of St-Cyr.

the invasion of Germany by the army of Jourdan spread the belief that it was in that quarter that the serious attack of the Republicans was to be made. To mislead the Imperialists still further as to his real design, Moreau made a general attack on their intrenchments at Mannheim, which had the effect of inducing them to withdraw the greater part of their forces to the right bank, leaving only fifteen battalions to guard the *tête-de-pont* on the French side. Meanwhile Wurmser having departed at the head of twenty-eight thousand choice troops for Italy, the command of both armies devolved on the Archduke. Moreau deemed this juncture favourable for the execution of his design upon Kehl; and accordingly, on the evening of the 23d, the gates of Strassburg were suddenly closed, all intercourse with the German shore was rigidly prohibited, and columns of troops marched in all directions towards the point of embarkation.¹

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23d June.
1 Th. viii.
310, 311.
Jom. viii.
199, 206.

The points selected for this hazardous operation were Gamsheim and Kehl. Twelve thousand men were collected at the first point, and sixteen thousand at the second, both detachments being under the orders of Desaix; while the forces of the Imperialists were so scattered, that they could not assemble above seventeen thousand men in forty-eight hours in any quarter that might be menaced. At midnight the troops defiled, in different columns and profound silence, towards the stations of embarkation; while false attacks, attended with much

38.
Admirable
skill shown
in the pas-
sage, which
proves suc-
cessful.

by a magnificent Atlas, have become one of the most important military records of the Revolution. His name will frequently appear in the following pages, particularly in Catalonia in 1809 and 1810, and during the campaigns of Moscow and Germany, in 1812 and 1813. His talents for war were remarkable. Few of his generals possessed more of the confidence of Napoleon, and none has left such scientific and luminous military memoirs on the campaigns in which he was engaged. His abilities were of the solid and judicious, rather than the showy and dazzling kind; his understanding was excellent, his penetration keen, his judgment sound, his survey of affairs comprehensive, and he was brave and tenacious of purpose; but he had not the eagle glance of Napoleon, nor the heroic energy of Ney; and he was better qualified to make a circumspect commander-in-chief than a brilliant leader of a corps of an army.—See *Vie de St Cyr*, prefixed to his *Memoirs*, vol. i. 1-12; and *Biographie des Contemporains*, viii. 263 and 264, (GOUVION-ST-CYR.)

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noise and constant discharges of artillery, were made at other places, to distract the attention of the enemy. At half-past one Desaix gave the signal for departure; two thousand five hundred men embarked in silence, and rowed across the arm of the Rhine to the island of Ehslar Rhin, which was occupied by the Imperialists. The French fell, without firing a shot, with so much impetuosity upon the videttes, that the Germans fled in disorder to the right bank, without thinking of cutting the bridges of boats which connected the island with the shore. Thither they were speedily followed by the Republicans, who, although unsupported by cavalry or artillery, ventured to advance into the plain, and approach the ramparts of Kehl. With heroic resolution, but adopting the most prudent course in such circumstances, the commander sent back the boats instantly to the French side, to bring over reinforcements, leaving his little band, alone and unsupported, in the midst of the enemy's army. Their advanced guard was speedily assailed by the Suabian contingent, greatly superior in numbers, which was encamped in that neighbourhood; but they were repulsed by the steadiness of the French infantry, supported by two pieces of artillery, which they had captured on first reaching the shore. Before six o'clock in the morning, a new detachment of equal strength arrived; a flying bridge was established between the island and the left bank, and the Republicans found themselves in such strength, that they advanced to the attack of the intrenchments of Kehl. They were carried at the point of the bayonet; the troops of Suabia, intrusted with the defence, flying with such precipitation that they lost thirteen pieces of cannon and seven hundred men. On the following day a bridge of boats was established between Strassburg and Kehl, and the whole army passed over in safety. Such was the passage of the Rhine at Kehl, which at the time was celebrated as an exploit of the most glorious character.¹ Without doubt the secrecy, rapidity, and decision with which it was carried into effect, merit

¹ Jom. viii.
209, 211.
Th. viii. 312,
313. St-Cyr,
iii. 33, 46.
Arch. Ch. ii.
102, 110.

the highest eulogium. But the weakness and dispersion of the enemy's forces rendered it an enterprise of comparatively little hazard ; and it was greatly inferior, both in point of difficulty and danger, to the crossing of the same river, in the following campaign, at Diersheim, or the passages of the Danube at Wagram, and of the Beresina at Studienka by Napoleon.

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Moreau had now the fairest opportunity of destroying the Austrian army on the Upper Rhine, by a series of diverging attacks, similar to those by which Napoleon had discomfited the army of Beaulieu in Piedmont. He had effected a passage, with a superior force, into the centre of the enemy's line ; and, by rapid movements, might have struck, right and left, as weighty blows as that great captain dealt out at Dego and Montenotte. But the French general, however consummate a commander, had not the fire or energy by which his younger rival was actuated, and trusted for success rather to skilful combinations or methodical arrangements, than to those master-strokes which are attended with peril, but frequently master fortune by the magnitude of the losses they inflict on the enemy, and the intensity of the passions which they awaken among mankind. Having at length collected all his divisions on the right bank, Moreau, at the end of June, advanced to the foot of the mountains of the Black Forest, at the head of seventy-one thousand men. This celebrated chain forms a mass of rocky hills covered with fir, separating the valley of the Rhine from that of the Neckar, and pierced only by narrow ravines or glens. The Suabian contingent, ten thousand strong, was already posted at Renchen, once so famous in the wars of Turenne, occupying the entrance of the defiles which lead through the mountains. They were attacked by the Republicans, and driven from their position with the loss of ten pieces of cannon and eight hundred men. Meanwhile the Imperialists were collecting their scattered forces with the utmost haste, to make head against the formidable

39.
Cautious
movements
of Moreau.

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¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 116, 125.
St-Cyr, iii.
50, 71. Jom.
viii. 212,
218. Th.
viii. 314,
315.

40.
Indecisive
actions on
the Murg.

enemy who had thus burst into the centre of their line. The Archduke Charles had no sooner received the intelligence, than he resolved to hasten in person to arrest the advance of an army threatening to fall upon his line of communications, and possibly get the start of him on the Danube. For this purpose he set off on the 26th, with twenty-four battalions and thirty-nine squadrons, from the banks of the Lahn, and advanced by forced marches towards the Black Forest, while the scattered divisions of the army formerly under Wurmser were converging towards the menaced point.¹

Moreau's plan was to descend the valley of the Rhine, with his centre and left wing, under the command of Desaix and St-Cyr; while his right, under Ferino, attacked and carried the defiles of the Black Forest, and pushed on to the banks of the Neckar. The Austrians on the Upper Rhine and the Murg were about forty-eight thousand strong; while the Archduke was hastening with half that number to their support. Previous to advancing to the northward, Moreau detached some brigades from his centre to clear the right flank of the army, and drive the enemy from the heights of the Black Forest, which operation was successfully accomplished. Meanwhile, the left wing, continuing to descend the valley of the Rhine, through a broken country, intersected with woods and ravines, approached the corps of Latour, who defended the banks of the Murg with twenty-seven thousand men. He was attacked there by the centre of the Republicans, with nearly the same force, the left under St-Cyr not having yet arrived; and, after an indecisive engagement, the Austrians retired in the best order, covered by their numerous cavalry, leaving to their antagonists no other advantage but the possession of the field of battle. Important reinforcements speedily came up on both sides; the Archduke arrived with twenty-four thousand men to the support of the Imperialists, while Moreau counterbalanced the acquisition by

² Th. viii.
318. Arch.
Ch. ii. 134,
138. Jom.
viii. 220,
225. Personal
observation.

bringing up St-Cyr, with the whole left wing, to his aid. The forces on the two sides were now nearly equal, amounting on either to about fifty thousand men; and their situation was nearly the same, both being at right angles to the Rhine, and extending from that stream, through a marshy and woody plain, to the mountains of the Black Forest.

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The Archduke, who felt the value of time, and was apprehensive of being speedily recalled to the defence of the Lower Rhine, already threatened by Jourdan, resolved to commence the attack, and, in order to render his numerous cavalry of service, to engage as much as possible in the plain. For this purpose he advanced the Saxons on his left to turn the French right in the mountains, and threaten their rear, strengthened the plateau of Rothensol, where his left centre rested, advanced his centre to Malsch, and arranged his formidable cavalry, supported by ten battalions, so as to press the left of the Republicans in the plain of the Rhine. His attack was fixed for the 10th July; but Moreau, who deemed it hazardous to remain on the defensive, anticipated him by a general assault on the preceding day. Wisely judging

41.
The French
gain success
on the Im-
perial right.

that it was of importance to avoid the plain, where the numerous cavalry of the Imperialists promised to be of such advantage, he entirely drew back his own left, and directed the weight of his force by his right against the Austrian position in the mountains. St-Cyr, who commanded the Republicans in that quarter, was charged with the assault of the plateau of Rothensol, an elevated plain in the midst of the rocky ridges of the Black Forest, the approaches to which were obstructed by shrubs, scaurs, and underwood, and which was occupied by six Austrian battalions. These brave troops repulsed successive attacks of the French columns; but having, on the defeat of the last, pursued the assailants into the rugged and woody ground on the declivity of the heights, their ranks became broken, and St-Cyr, returning to the

9th July.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

¹ Th. viii.
320. Jom.
viii. 227,
233. Arch.
Ch. ii. 138,
149. St-
Cyr, iii. 68,
69.

42.
The Arch-
duke re-
solves to
retreat, and
retires
through the
Black For-
est into
Bavaria.

charge, routed the Imperialists, carried the position, and drove back their left towards Pforzheim. Meanwhile Desaix, with the French centre, commenced a furious attack on the village of Malsch, which, after being taken and retaken several times, finally remained in the hands of the Austrians. Their numerous cavalry now deployed in the plain; but the French kept cautiously under cover of the woods and thickets with which the country abounded: and the Austrians, notwithstanding their great superiority in horse, were unable to obtain any further success than repulsing the attacks on their centre and right, towards the banks of the Rhine.¹

The relative situation of the contending parties was now very singular. Moreau had dislodged the Imperialists from the mountains, and, by throwing forward his right, he had it in his power to cut them off from the line of communication with the Hereditary States, and menace their retreat to the valley of the Danube. On the other hand, by so doing, he was himself exposed to the danger of being separated from his base in the valley of the Rhine, seeing Desaix crushed by the victorious centre and numerous cavalry of the Austrians, and St-Cyr isolated and endangered in the mountains. A general of Napoleon's resolution and ability would possibly have derived from this combination of circumstances the means of achieving the most splendid successes; but the Archduke was prevented from following so energetic a course by the critical circumstances of the Austrian dominions, which lay exposed and unprotected to the attacks of the enemy, and the perilous situation in which he might be placed in case of disaster, with a hostile army on one side, and a great river, lined with the enemy's fortresses, on the other. For these reasons he resolved to forego the splendid, to pursue the prudent course—to retire from the frontier to the interior of Germany, and to regain, by the valleys of the Maine and the Neckar, the plain of the Danube, which river, supported by the

fortresses of Ulm and Ratisbon, was the true frontier of Austria, and brought him as much nearer his own, as it withdrew the enemy from their resources. With this view he retired, by a forced march in the evening, to Pforzheim, without being disquieted in his movement; and, after throwing garrisons into Philipsburg and Mannheim, prepared to abandon the valley of the Rhine, and retreat by the Neckar into the Bavarian plains. Agreeably to this plan, the Imperialists broke up on the 14th from Pforzheim, and retired slowly and in the best order towards Stuttgart and the right bank of the Neckar. By so doing they drew nearer to the army of the Lower Rhine under Wartensleben, and gained the great object of obtaining a central and interior line of communication, from which the Archduke soon derived the most brilliant advantages. Meanwhile Moreau advanced his right centre, under St-Cyr, through the mountains to Pforzheim, while the right wing, under Ferino, spread itself through the Black Forest to the frontiers of Switzerland. The result was, that, by the middle of July, the Republican army covered a space of fifty leagues broad, from Stuttgart to the Lake of Constance.¹

Meanwhile important operations had taken place on the Lower Rhine. No sooner was Jourdan informed of the passage of the Rhine at Kehl, and the departure of the Archduke to reinforce the army of the Upper Rhine, than he hastened to recross the same river at Düsseldorf and Neuwied, advancing, as he had always before done, towards the Lahn, with a view to debouche into the valley of the Maine. The Imperialists, under Wartensleben, there consisted only of twenty-five thousand infantry and eleven thousand cavalry—a force totally inadequate to make head against the Republicans, who amounted, now after the necessary deductions to blockade Mayence, Cassel, and Ehrenbreitstein, to fifty thousand men. At the period of the passage of the river, the Austrian army was scattered over a long line, and might have been easily

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14th to 28th
July.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 148, 149,
175. Jom.
viii. 234,
237. Th.
viii. 322,
326. St-Cyr,
ii. 54, 59.

43.
Operations
on the Low-
er Rhine.
1st July.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

10th July.

beaten in detail by an enterprising enemy ; but Jourdan allowed them to concentrate their troops behind the Lahn, without deriving any advantage from his superiority of force and their exposed situation. After some inconsiderable skirmishing, the Republicans crossed that river ; and the Austrians having stood firm in the position of Friedberg, a partial action ensued, which terminated to the disadvantage of the latter, who, after a vigorous resistance, finding their right flank turned by Lefebvre, retreated with the loss of two pieces of cannon and twelve hundred men. After this success, Jourdan advanced to the banks of the Maine, and, by a bombardment of two days, compelled his adversaries to evacuate the great city of Frankfort, and retire altogether to the left bank of that river. The Austrians now drew all their disposable troops out of the fortress of Mayence, and raised their force under Wartensleben to thirty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry ; while Jourdan's army, on the right bank of the Maine, was swelled, by the addition of some of the blockading corps, to forty-six thousand of the former, and eight thousand of the latter.¹

¹ Th. viii.
323. Jom.
viii. 264,
278. Arch.
Ch. ii. 150.
175. St Cyr,
iii. 89, 92.

44.
Erroneous
plan of the
campaign by
the Direc-
tory.

The Directory, in prescribing the conduct of the campaign to the generals, were constantly influenced by the desire to turn at once both flanks of the enemy—an injudicious design, which, by giving an eccentric direction to their forces, and preventing them from communicating with or assisting each other, led to all the disasters which signalled the conclusion of the campaign. On the other hand, the Archduke, by giving a concentric direction to his forces in their retreat, and ultimately arriving at a point where he could fall, with an overwhelming force, on either adversary, ably prepared all the triumphs which effaced its early reverses. In conformity with these different plans—while Moreau was extending his right wing to the foot of the Alps, pressing through the defiles of the Albis and the Black Forest into the valley of the

Danube, and Jourdan was slowly advancing up the banks of the Maine towards Bohemia — the Archduke regained the right bank of the Neckar, and Wartensleben the left bank of the Maine; movements which, by bringing them into close proximity with each other, rendered unavailing all the superiority of their enemies. In truth, nothing but this able direction of the retreating, and injudicious dispersion of the advancing force, could have enabled the Imperialists at all to make head against their enemies; for, independent of the deduction of twenty-eight thousand men despatched under Wurmser into Italy, the Austrians were weakened by thirty thousand men whom the Archduke was obliged to leave in the different garrisons on the Rhine; so that the force under his immediate command consisted only of forty thousand infantry and eighteen thousand cavalry, while Moreau was at the head of sixty-five thousand of the former force, and six thousand of the latter.¹

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1796.

¹Arch. Ch.
ii. 176, 179.
Jom. viii.
282, 283.
St-Cyr, iii.
93, 100.

But the admirable plan of operations which the Archduke sketched out at Pforzheim, "to retreat slowly, and disputing every inch of ground, without hazarding a general engagement, until the two retiring armies were so near that they could unite, and he might fall with a superior force upon one or other of his adversaries," ultimately rendered abortive all this great superiority, and threw back the French forces with disgrace and disaster to the Rhine. Having assembled all his parks of artillery, during his short stay at Pforzheim, and thrown provisions into the fortresses, which were to be left to their own resources, the Archduke commenced his retreat, during which his force was still further weakened by the withdrawing of the Saxon and Suabian contingents, amounting to ten thousand men, the government of whose states, alarmed by the advance of the Republicans, now hastened to make their separate submissions to the conquerors. By the 25th July, the Archduke's army was concentrated on the right bank of the Neckar, betwixt

45.
Admirable
plan of the
Archduke
to counter-
act it. He
retires
through the
Black
Forest.

14th July.

17th 25th,
and 27th
July.

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1796.

Cannstadt and Esslingen. It was there attacked, on the following morning, by Moreau, with his whole centre and left wing; and after an obstinate engagement, both parties remained on the field of battle. Next day the Imperialists retired in two columns, under the Archduke and Hotze, through the Alb mountains, which separate the valley of the Neckar from that of the Danube. The one followed the valley of the Reims and the route of Schorndorf, the other the valley of the Fils. Their united force did not now exceed twenty-five thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry. Moreau followed them nearly in a parallel line, and on the 23d debouched into the plains near the sources of the Danube, and the upper extremity of the valley of the Reims.¹

¹ Jom. viii.
238, 241.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 191, 215.
St-Cyr, iii.
105, 113.

46.
Indecisive
action at
Neresheim.

The Archduke took a position at the top of the long ridge of Böminkirch, with the design of falling upon the heads of the enemy's columns, as they issued from the valleys into the plain, and in order to gain time for the evacuation of the magazines of Ulm. The formidable nature of his position there, and the dispersion of his own forces, which were toiling through the defiles in the rear, compelled Moreau to halt for six days to concentrate his forces. Six days afterwards the Imperial general resumed his retreat, which was continued with uncommon firmness, and in the best order, till he reached the Danube, where he prepared to recommence the offensive. He there found himself in communication with his left wing, under Frœlich, which had retired through the Black Forest, and amounted to fourteen thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry; while the corresponding wing of the Republicans, under Ferino, approached Moreau, and raised his force to fifty-eight thousand infantry and seven thousand horse. The Archduke advanced in order of battle to Neresheim; but his left wing, under Frœlich, did not arrive in time to take any part in the action which there ensued. His design in so doing was to gain time for the evacuation of his magazines at Ulm,

and be enabled to continue his retreat with more leisure towards Wartensleben, who was now falling back towards the Naab: but, as he gave battle with his rear to the Danube, he ran the risk of total destruction in case of defeat. By a rapid movement he succeeded in forcing back and turning the right of Moreau, and, pressing forward with his left wing, got into his rear, and caused such an alarm, that all the parks of ammunition retreated in haste from the field of battle. But the centre, under St-Cyr, stood firm; and the Austrian force being dis-united into several columns, over a space of ten leagues, the Archduke was unable to take advantage of his success, so as to gain a decisive victory. Meanwhile Moreau, nowise intimidated by the defeat of his right wing, or the alarm in his rear, strengthened his centre by his reserve, and vigorously repulsed all the attacks of the enemy; and at two o'clock in the afternoon the firing ceased at all points, without any decisive success having been gained by either party, both of whom had to lament a loss of three thousand men. On the day following, the Imperialists crossed the Danube without being disquieted by the enemy, and broke down all the bridges over that river as far as Donauwörth. Meanwhile Frœlich was retreating through the Forest, followed by Ferino, and between these corps several bloody but indecisive actions took place. But more important events were now approaching, and those decisive strokes about to be struck, which saved Germany and determined the fate of the campaign.¹

Jourdan, after having remained a few days at Frankfurt, and levied a heavy contribution on that flourishing city, prepared to resume his march, in order to co-operate with Moreau in the advance into the Empire. He commenced his march, with forty-seven thousand men, up the valley of the Maine, on the great road to Würzburg; while Wartensleben retired, with a force somewhat inferior, through the forest of Spessart, to the neighbourhood of that town. Würzburg soon after surrendered

11th Aug.

¹ Jom. viii.
359, 360,
387. Arch.
Ch. ii. 279,
281. Jom.
viii. 220,
255. St-Cyr,
iii. 144, 174.

47.
Operations
of Jourdan.
Headvances
into Fran-
conia.
17th and
18th July.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

5th Aug.

12th, 14th,
and 16th
August.

18th Aug.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 260, 265.
Jom. viii.
283, 301.
Jourdan,
50, 89.

48.
The Arch-
duke joins
Wartensle-
ben, and
defeats
Jourdan at
Amberg.
16th Aug.

to the invaders, and the latter general retired successively to Zell, Bamberg, and Forchheim, where a sharp action ensued between the cavalry of the two armies, in which the French honourably resisted a superior force. From thence the Austrians continued their retreat towards the Naab, and, after bloody actions at Neukirchen, Sulzbach, and Wolvering, in which no decisive success was obtained by either party, crossed that river, and finally arrested their retrograde movement on the 18th August. The converging direction of the retiring columns of the two Austrian armies might have apprised so experienced an officer as Jourdan of the object of the Archduke, and the danger which he ran by continuing any farther his advance. But he did not conceive himself at liberty to deviate from the orders of the Directory; and, instead of interposing between their approaching armies, continued his eccentric movement to turn their outermost flank.¹

The time had now arrived when the Archduke deemed it safe to put in practice his long-meditated movement for the relief of Wartensleben. In the middle of August he set out from the environs of Neuburg on the Danube, with twenty-eight thousand men, and moved northwards towards the Naab, leaving General Latour with thirty-five thousand to make head during his absence against Moreau. He arrived on that river on the 20th, and orders were immediately given for attacking the enemy. By the junction of the corps under the Archduke with that under Wartensleben, their united force was raised to sixty-three thousand men; while the troops of Jourdan's army opposed to them did not exceed, after the losses it had sustained, forty-five thousand. Thus this young prince had solved the most difficult and important problem in war, that of accumulating, with forces upon the whole inferior, a decided superiority at the decisive point. Bernadotte, who commanded the advanced guard of Jourdan's army, which had crossed the ridge of hills form-

ing the northern boundary of the valley of the Danube, had taken post at Teining. He was there attacked by the Archduke, and, after an obstinate resistance, driven back into the mountains he had recently passed, which separate the valley of the Maine from that of the Danube; while Hotze, who came up towards the close of the action, pursued his discomfited troops to the gates of Neumarkt. Early on the following morning the Austrians resumed the pursuit, and drove the Republicans from that town so far back, that they found themselves on the flank of Jourdan's army on the Naab, which was no sooner informed of these disasters than it retired to Amberg. Leaving Hotze to pursue the remains of Bernadotte's army towards Altdorf, the Archduke turned with the bulk of his forces upon Jourdan; and, having put himself in communication with Wartensleben, concerted with him a general attack upon the main body of the Republicans at Amberg. The Austrians, under the Archduke, advanced in three columns; and when the soldiers perceived, far distant on the horizon to the northward, the fire of Wartensleben's lines, the importance of whose co-operation the whole army understood, opening on the enemy's flank, nothing could restrain their impetuosity, and loud shouts announced the arrival of the long wished-for moment of victory. The French made but a feeble resistance; assailed at once in front and flank, they fell back to the plateau in the rear of their position, and owed their safety to the firmness with which General NEY* sustained the attacks of the enemy with the rearguard.¹

The situation of Jourdan was now in the highest degree critical. By this success at Amberg, the Archduke had

CHAP.
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1796.

22d Aug.

23d Aug.

24th Aug.

¹ Arch. Ch.
ii. 26, 43.
Jom. ix. 16,
17. Jourdan,
90, 110.

* MICHEL NEY, the bravest hero whom France produced in that age of glory, was born on 17th January 1769, in the same year with Wellington, Lannes, and so many other illustrious men of the Revolution. He was the son of a cooper at Saarelouis, who had formerly served in the army; but though his father wished him to become a miner, his ardent and aspiring disposition led him, at sixteen, to enlist in a regiment of hussars, in which he was a non-commissioned officer when the Revolution broke out. His extreme intrepidity, coolness in danger, and eminent talent in the field, soon became conspicuous: he was rapidly promoted by the election of the soldiers

Early history
of Ney.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

49.

Dangerous
situation of
Jourdan.

1st Sept.

got upon his direct road to Nuremberg, through which his retreat necessarily lay, and he was in consequence compelled to fall back through the mountains which separate the Naab from the Maine by cross roads, with all his baggage and parks of artillery. During this critical operation, the firmness and discipline of the French troops alone saved them from total destruction. Ney, with the rearguard, continued to make head against the numerous cavalry of the enemy, and, after a painful passage of six days, during which they were pressed with the utmost vigour, and incurred great dangers, they at length extricated themselves from the mountains, and reached Schweinfurt on the Maine, in the deepest dejection, at the end of August. Hotze passed that river on the 1st September, and soon after his advanced guard made itself master of Würzburg; while the Archduke likewise conducted the bulk of his forces to the right bank of the river. Jourdan, deeming an action indispensable in order to obtain some respite for his retreating columns, made preparations for a general attack on his pursuers, at the same time that the Archduke was collecting his forces for an action on his own part. The courage and vivacity of the Republican soldiers appeared again when they faced the enemy, and they prepared with the utmost alacrity to occupy all the positions which were deemed necessary before commencing the battle. On the 2d September both parties were engaged in completing their preparations, and on the 3d the battle decisive of the fate of Germany took place.¹

The French army was drawn up on the right bank of the Maine, from Würzburg to Schweinfurt, partly on a series of heights which formed the northern barrier of the in his own regiment, and ere long was first appointed aide-de-camp to General de Lallemand, and afterwards adjutant-general to General Kleber. It was in this latter capacity that he was engaged in the campaign of 1796, in Germany, in the course of which he repeatedly distinguished himself, and was appointed general of brigade. His character will more fully find a place in a subsequent chapter, after his numerous great and heroic deeds have been recounted; but the reader may mark him even now as one of the most distinguished of Napoleon's lieutenants, and one whose tragic fate has given a melancholy interest to his memory.—*Ney's Memoirs*, i. l. 36; and *Biographie Universelle*, (NEY,) xxxi. 196.

¹ Th. viii.
390, 408.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 43, 106.
Jourdan,
130, 146.
Ney, i. 208,
239. Jom.
ix. 19.

valley, and partly on the plains which extended from their foot to the shores of the river. Jourdan imagined that he had only to contend with a part of the Austrian force, and that the Archduke had returned in person to make head against the Republicans on the Danube; but instead of that, the Austrian prince had rapidly brought his columns to the right bank, and was prepared to combat his antagonist with superior forces. A thick fog, which concealed the armies from each other, favoured the motions of the Imperialists; and, when the sun broke through the clouds at eleven o'clock, it glittered on the numerous squadrons of the Imperialists, drawn up in double lines on the meadows adjoining the river. The action commenced by Kray attacking the left flank of the French, while Lichtenstein spread himself out in the plain, followed by Wartensleben, who, coming up upon the left bank of the Maine, threw himself at the head of the cavalry into the river, and followed close after the infantry, who had defiled along the bridge. The French general, Grenier, who was stationed at the menaced point, made a vigorous resistance with the Republican cavalry and light infantry; but the reserve of the Austrian cuirassiers having been brought up, Jourdan was obliged to support the line by his reserve of cavalry. A desperate charge of horse took place, in which the Imperialists were at first repulsed, but the Austrian cuirassiers having assailed the Republican squadrons when disordered by success, they were broken, thrown into confusion, and driven behind the lines of their infantry. Meanwhile the grenadiers of Werneck, united to the corps under Starray, routed the French centre; Hotze pressed their right, and Kray drove the division of Grenier entirely off the field into the wood of Gramchatz. Victory declared for the Imperialists at all points; and Jourdan esteemed himself fortunate in being able to reach the forests which stretched from Gramchatz to Arnstein, without being broken by the redoubtable Austrian squadrons.¹

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XXI.

1796.

50.

He is again
routed near
Würzburg.

¹ *Jom.* ix.
36. *Arch.*
Ch. iii. 99,
116. *Th.*
viii. 409,
410. *Jour-*
dan, 160,
172. *Ney*,
i. 216.

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

51.

Great effects
of this vic-
tory.

Such was the battle of Würtzburg, which delivered Germany, and determined the fate of the campaign. The trophies of the victors were by no means commensurate to these momentous results, amounting only to seven pieces of cannon and a few prisoners: but it produced a most important effect upon the spirit of the two armies, elevating the Imperial as much as it depressed the Republican forces, and procuring for the Archduke the possession of the direct line of communication from the Maine to the Rhine. Disastrous as it was in its consequences, the battle itself was highly honourable to the defeated army; for they had to contend with thirty thousand men of all arms, against thirty-one thousand infantry, and thirteen thousand splendid cavalry.¹

¹ Arch. Ch.
iii. 116, 117.
Jom. ix. 36,
37.

52.

Continued
and disas-
trous retreat
of Jourdan.

After this disaster, Jourdan had no alternative but to retire behind the Lahn, a position in which he might rally round his standards the force under Marceau, which blockaded Mayence, and the reinforcements which were expected from the north. In doing this, however, he was obliged to retreat through the mountains of Fulda, the roads of which are as bad as the country is rugged and inhospitable. At the same time, Marceau received orders to raise the blockade of Mayence, and make all haste to join the Republican commander-in-chief behind the Lahn. The Archduke, nothing intimidated by the menacing advance of Moreau into Bavaria, wisely resolved to pursue his beaten enemy to the Rhine; but, instead of following him through the defiles of the mountains, where a resolute rearguard might have arrested an army, he determined to advance, by a parallel march, straight to the Lahn, by the great road of Aschaffenburg. The losses sustained by the Republicans in their retreat were very great. The citadel of Würtzburg soon surrendered with eight hundred men; one hundred and twenty-two pieces of cannon, taken by them during their advance, were abandoned at Schweinfurt; sixty pieces, and an immense quantity of ammunition, at Freudenberg; and eighty-three pieces soon after.² The

² Arch. Ch.
iii. 128, 130.
Hard. iii.
467, 468.
Jom. ix. 37,
38. Jour-
dan, 187.

peasants, who were extremely exasperated at the enormous contributions levied by the Republicans during their advance, supported by the Austrian light troops, who were detached in pursuit of the enemy, fell upon the flanks and rear of the retreating army, and cut off vast numbers of the stragglers who issued from their ranks.*

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1796.

The Republicans reached the Lahn in the most disorganised and miserable state on the 9th September, and four days afterwards they were joined by the blockading force from Mayence, under Marceau, fifteen thousand strong, and a division of ten thousand from the army of the north, which in some degree restored the balance of the two armies. The Archduke, having concentrated his forces at Aschaffenburg, resolved to attack them in this position, and drive them behind the Rhine. The action took place on the 16th. The Austrians advanced in three columns, amounting to thirty-eight thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry, having received some reinforcements from the garrison of Mayence. Under cover of a powerful fire of artillery, they forced the bridges of the Lahn, after an obstinate engagement; made themselves masters of Limburg and Diez, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of heroism on the part of General Marceau; and defeated the enemy at all points. During the night the Republicans beat a retreat, under cover of a thick fog, which long concealed their movements from the Imperialists; and, when it cleared away on the following morning, they found all the positions of the French abandoned. The pursuit was continued with the utmost vigour during the two following days; and, on the 19th, a serious engagement took place with the rearguard at Altenkirchen, where General Marceau was severely

53.
The Arch-
duke again
defeats
them, and
drives them
across the
Rhine.
16th Sept.

* The French themselves admit that it was the hatred inspired by their exactions which occasioned this popular exasperation against them. "The animosity of the Germans," said Carnot, in his confidential letter announcing these disasters to Napoleon, "and the unhappy consequences which have flowed from it, are a fresh and painful warning to us how speedily the relaxation of discipline becomes fatal to an army."—*Letter Confid. of the 20th September.*

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1796.

20th Sept.
 1 Jom. ix.
 45, 166.
 Arch. Ch.
 iii. 178, 180.
 Jourdan,
 189, 220.
 Th. viii. 410.
 Ney, i. 228,
 229.

wounded, and fell into the hands of the Imperialists. The Archduke, who admired his great military qualities, paid him the most unremitting attention; but in spite of all his care he died a few days after, and was buried with military honours amidst the tears of his generous enemies, within the Austrian camp, in front of Coblenz, amidst discharges of artillery from both armies.* Such was the demoralised and disjointed state of the Republican army, that, notwithstanding the great reinforcements which they had received, they were totally unable to make head against the enemy. They recrossed the Rhine on the 20th at Bonn and Neuwied, and were reduced to a state of total inactivity for the remainder of the campaign, having lost not less than twenty thousand men since they left the frontiers of Bohemia, by the sword, sickness, and desertion.¹

54.
 Severe
 struggle of
 Latour with
 Moreau on
 the Danube.

While the Austrian prince was pursuing this splendid career of victory on the banks of the Maine, the corps left under the command of Latour to oppose Moreau, which did not exceed thirty-four thousand men of every arm, even including the detachment of Frelich, was sustaining an unequal conflict on the banks of the Danube. Had the French general, the moment that he received

Early history
 of Marceau.

* Francois Severin Marceau was born at Chartres on the 1st May 1769, the same day with the Duke of Wellington, and in a year unusually prodigal of heroic characters. His father was a village attorney, and had neglected his education; but his elder sister, who had come to supply the place of a mother, inspired him with those elevated sentiments and heroic dispositions by which he was afterwards so distinguished. His passions, however, were ardent, his habits irregular, and his temper vehement, insomuch that his relations were glad to get him enlisted, at seventeen, as a common soldier in the regiment of Savoy-Carignan, in which he rapidly rose to the highest rank of a non-commissioned officer. No sooner did the Revolution break out, than he attached himself with vehemence to the popular side, mingled in the revolt on 14th July 1789, which terminated in the storming of the Bastille, and was soon after appointed inspector of the national guard in his native town of Chartres. When the war broke out in 1792, he set out for the frontiers as commander of the national guard of the department of the Eure-et-Loire. Though he distinguished himself in the very first campaign, yet he soon found the license and irregular discipline of these volunteer corps altogether insupportable; and he, in consequence, solicited employment in the troops of the line, in which he was appointed captain of cuirassiers in the German Legion, and sent to combat the Vendéans. No sooner had he arrived at Tours, on his way to

intelligence of the departure of the Archduke, followed him with the bulk of his forces, the Imperialists, placed between two fires, would have been exposed to imminent danger, and the very catastrophe which they were most anxious to avert, viz. the junction of the Republican armies in the centre of Germany, have been rendered inevitable. Fortunately for the Austrians, instead of adopting so decisive a course, he resolved to advance into Bavaria, hoping thereby to effect a diversion in favour of his colleague—a fatal resolution, which, though in some degree justified by the order of the Directory to detach fifteen thousand men at the same time into the Tyrol, utterly ruined the campaign, by increasing the great distance which already separated the Republican armies. After remaining several days in a state of inactivity, he collected an imposing body of fifty-three thousand men, on the banks of the Lech, and forced the fords of that river on the very day of the battle of Amberg. Latour, who had 24th Aug. extended his small army too much, in his anxiety to cover a great extent of country, found his rearguard assailed at Friedberg, and was defeated with the loss of 26th Aug. seventeen hundred men and fourteen pieces of cannon. After this disaster he retreated behind the Isar, in the

the army, than he was arrested by the Commissioners of the Convention, and made a narrow escape from the guillotine. He afterwards, at the battle of Saumur, saved the life of Bourbotte, a member of the Convention, at the imminent hazard of his own; and this generous action having attracted universal attention, he was appointed general of brigade, at the age of twenty-four, and soon after intrusted, at the recommendation of Kleber, with the command of the northern army of the West, which he led at the battle of Mans, and the fatal rout of Savenay.

Here, however, a new peril, greater than the bayonets of the Royalists, awaited him. During the sack of Mans, a young and beautiful Vendean threw herself at his feet, beseeching him to save her from the brutality of the soldiers. With the spirit of a true soldier, Marceau extricated her from their grasp, and had her conveyed to a place of safety. The Jacobins immediately lodged information against him as sheltering the aristocrats; he was thrown into prison, and only saved from the guillotine by the efforts of the Conventionalist Bourbotte, whom he had saved on the field of battle. His life, by his intercession, was spared, but he was deprived of his command, and for some months remained in a private station. Carnot, however, had too much discernment to permit his talents to waste long in obscurity; he was again intrusted with a division in the army of the Sambre and Meuse, and bore a

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¹ Arch. Ch.
iii. 52, 59.
Jom. ix. 50,
56. St-Cyr,
iii. 188, 222.

55.
The Arch-
duke threat-
ens his
retreat at
Kehl.
18th Sept.

direction of Landshut; his centre fell back to the neighbourhood of Munich, while the left wing stretched to the foot of the mountains of the Tyrol. Moreau continued for three weeks occupied in inconsiderable movements in Bavaria; during which a severe combat took place at Langenberg, between four thousand Austrian horse and Desaix's division, in which, after the French troops had been at first broken, they ultimately succeeded, by heroic efforts, in repulsing the enemy. The Archduke was nothing moved by these disasters, but resolutely continued his pursuit of Jourdan. "Let Moreau advance to Vienna," said he, on parting with Latour; "it is of no moment, provided I beat Jourdan." Memorable words! indicating at once the firmness of a great man, and the eye of a consummate general.¹

This resolute conduct had the desired effect. After the battle of Würzburg, the Archduke detached Murferd with a small division to join the garrison of Mannheim, and combine an attack on the *tête-de-pont* at Kehl, directly in the rear of Moreau, and commanding his principal communication with France. The French were driven into the works, which were assaulted with great bravery by the Imperialists; and, though the attack was

distinguished part in the battle of Fleurus. Subsequently, he passed to the army of the Lower Rhine, and was intrusted with the defence and ultimate destruction of the bridges of the Rhine, after the Republican army had crossed over in the close of the campaign of 1795. In despair at seeing the division of Bernadotte, which had not yet passed over, endangered by the premature destruction of the bridge by an engineer under his orders, Marceau drew his sword and was going to kill himself, when his arm was arrested by Kleber, who persuaded him to make an effort to repel the enemy, till the bridge was repaired, which was gallantly and effectually done. Generous, humane, and disinterested, he was yet vehement and sometimes hasty; but his failings were those of a noble character. His military qualities were thus summed up by Kleber:—"I never knew a general so capable as General Marceau of changing with sang-froid a disposition of battle amidst the enemies' bullets." His civil virtues were thus attested by the magistrates of the hostile city of Coblenz—"He did not seduce our daughters; he dishonoured not our husbands; and in the midst of war he alleviated its severities on the people, and protected property and industry in the conquered provinces." A monument, designed by Kleber, was raised by the generous care of the Archduke Charles, and still remains an equally honourable memorial of both nations.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxvi. 583, 584; *Biographie des Contemporains*, xii. 391, 392.

repulsed, it spread great consternation through the French army, who saw how nearly they had lost their principal communication with their own country. Moreau, who began to be apprehensive that he might be involved in disaster if he advanced further into Germany, proceeded with great circumspection, and arrived on the Isar on the 24th September. Being there informed of the disasters of Jourdan, and that a part of Latour's corps, under Nauendorf, was rapidly advancing upon Ulm to turn his left flank, he halted his army, and next day began a retreat. His situation was now in the highest degree critical. Advanced into the heart of Bavaria, with the defiles of the Black Forest in his rear, at the distance of two hundred miles from the Rhine, with Latour at the head of forty thousand men pressing the one flank, and the Archduke and Nauendorf with twenty-five thousand ready to fall on the other, he might anticipate even greater disasters than Jourdan had sustained before he regained the frontiers of the Republic. But, on the other hand, he was at the head of a superb army of seventy thousand men, whose courage had not been weakened by any disaster, and who possessed the most unlimited confidence, both in their own strength and the resources of their commander. There was no force in Germany capable of arresting so great a mass. It is not with detached columns, or by menacing communications, that the retreat of such a body is to be prevented.¹

Fully appreciating these great advantages, and aware that nothing is so likely to produce disaster in retreat as any symptoms of apprehension in the general, he resolved to continue his retrograde movement with the utmost regularity, and to dispute every inch of ground with the enemy when they threatened to press upon his forces. The Austrian armies likely to assail him were as follows:—Nauendorf, with nine thousand men, was on the Danube, ready to turn his left flank; Latour, with twenty-four thousand, in Bavaria, directly in his rear;

CHAP.
XXI.

1796.

24th Sept.

¹ Th. viii.
412. Jom.
ix. 63, 65.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 186, 208.
St-Cyr, iii.
222, 258.

56.
Moreau retreats in the most firm and methodical manner.

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1796.

Frœlich, with fourteen thousand, on the Upper Iller and in the Tyrol; while the Archduke, with seventeen thousand, might be expected to abandon the Lahn, and hasten to the scene of decisive operations on the Upper Rhine. It was by maintaining a firm front, and keeping his troops together in masses, that the junction or co-operation of these considerable forces could alone be prevented. Aware that the Archduke might probably block up the line of retreat by the Neckar, Moreau retired by the valley of the Danube and the Black Forest. Resting one of his wings on that stream, he sent forward his parks, his baggage, and his ammunition, before the army, and, covering his retreat by a powerful rearguard, succeeded both in repulsing all the attacks of the enemy, and in enabling the body of his army to continue their march without fatigue or interruption.¹

¹ Jom. ix.
63, 68.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 212, 213.
St-Cyr, iii.
240, 249.

57.

And defeats
Latour at
Biberach.

Want of concert in the Austrian generals at first eminently favoured his movements. Having retired behind the lake of Federsee, he found that Latour was isolated from Nauendorf, who was considerably in advance on the Danube, and the opportunity therefore appeared favourable for striking with superior forces a blow upon his weakened adversary. This was the more necessary, as he was approaching the entrance of the defiles of the Black Forest, which were occupied by the enemy, and it was of the last importance that his movement should not be impeded in traversing those long and difficult passages. Turning, therefore, fiercely upon his pursuers, he assailed Latour near Biberach. The Austrian general, believing that a part only of the enemy's force was in the front, gave battle in a strong position, extending along a series of wooded heights, lined by a formidable artillery. The action was for a long time fiercely contested; but at length the superior forces and abler manœuvres of the Republicans prevailed.² Desaix broke their right, while St-Cyr turned their left, and a complete victory crowned the efforts of the French, which cost the Im-

2d Oct.

² Jom. ix.
65, 71.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 213, 216,
230. Th.
viii. 414.
St-Cyr, iii.
240, 259,
310.

perialists four thousand prisoners and eighteen pieces of cannon.

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After this decisive blow, Moreau proceeded leisurely towards the Black Forest, directing his steps towards the Valley of Hell, in hopes of being able to debouche by Freiburg, before the Archduke arrived to interrupt his progress. He had already passed the separation of the road by the Neckar, and Nauendorf occupied that which passes by the valley of the Kinzig. He therefore directed his centre towards the entrance of the Valley of Hell, under the command of St-Cyr, while he stationed Desaix and Ferino on the right and left, to protect the movements of the principal body. The Austrian detachments in the mountains were too weak to oppose any effectual resistance to the passage of so powerful and concentrated a body as the French army. St-Cyr speedily dissipated the clouds of light troops which invested the pine-clad mountains of the Valley of Hell, and Latour, rendered cautious by disaster, without attempting to harass his retreat, moved by Homberg to unite himself to the Archduke. So ably were the measures of the French general concerted, that he not only passed the defiles without either confusion or loss, but debouched into the valley of the Rhine, rather in the attitude of a conqueror than as a fugitive.¹

1796.
58.
Retires
leisurely
through
the Black
Forest.

15th Oct.
1 Arch. Ch.
iii. 240.
Jom. ix. 74.
St-Cyr, iii.
311, 333.

Meanwhile the Archduke Charles, being now assured of the direction which Moreau had taken, directed Latour and the detached parties to join him by the valley of the Kinzig, while Nauendorf covered their movements by advancing between them and the French columns. The greater part of the Austrian forces were thus collected in the valley of the Rhine in the middle of October, and, though still inferior to the enemy, the Archduke resolved to lose no time in attacking and compelling them to recross that river. Moreau, on his part, was not less desirous of the combat, as he intended to advance to Kehl, and either maintain himself at the *tête-de-pont*

59.
Battle of
Emendingen
between
Moreau and
the Arch-
duke.
16th Oct.

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1796.

there, or cross leisurely over to Strassburg. The action took place at Emendingen, on the slopes where the mountains melt into the plain; and afforded an example of the truth of the military principle, that in *tactics*, or the operations of actual combat—in this respect widely different from *strategy*, or the general movements of a campaign—the possession of the mountains in general secures that of the valleys which lie at their feet. Waldkirch was felt by both parties to be the decisive point, from the command which it gave over the neighbouring valleys, and accordingly each general strove to reach it before his adversary; but the French, having the advantage of better roads, were the first to arrive. They were there attacked, however, by Nauendorf, who descended from the heights of the Black Forest, and after a bloody action drove St-Cyr, who commanded the Republicans, out of the town with severe loss. Meanwhile the success of the Austrians was not less decisive at other points; the Imperial columns having at length surmounted the difficulties of the roads, attacked and carried the village of Malterdingen, while their centre drove the Republicans back from Emendingen; and at length Moreau, defeated at all points, retired into the forest of Nemburg, behind the Elz, with the loss of two thousand men.¹

19th Oct.

¹ St-Cyr,
iv. 10, 26.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 248, 269.
Jom. ix. 78,
80.

60.
His last
stand at
Hohenblau;
but is driven
across the
Rhine.
20th Oct.

The Archduke made preparations on the following morning for re-establishing the bridges over the Elz, and renewing the combat; but Moreau retreated in the night, and commenced the passage of the Rhine. Desaix passed that river at Old Brisach, while the general-in-chief took post in the strong position of Schliengen, determined to accept battle, in order to gain time to defile in tranquillity by the bridge of Huningen. The valley of the Rhine is there cut at right angles by a barrier of rocky eminences, which stretch from the mountains of Hohenblau to the margin of the stream. It was on this formidable rampart that Moreau made his last stand, his left resting on the

Rhine, his centre on a pile of almost inaccessible rocks, his right on the cliffs of Sizenkirch. The Archduke divided his army into four columns. The Prince of Condé on the right drove in the Republican advanced posts, but made no serious impression; but Latour in the centre, and Nauendorf on the left, gallantly scaled the precipices, drove the Republicans from their positions, and, chasing them from height to height, from wood to wood, threw them before nightfall into such confusion, that nothing but the broken nature of the ground, which prevented cavalry from acting, and a violent storm which arose in the evening, saved them from a complete overthrow. Moreau retreated during the night, and on the following day commenced the passage of the Rhine, which was effected without molestation from the Imperialists.¹

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XXI.

1796.

¹ Jom. ix.
84, 89.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 272, 280.
St-Cyr, iv.
27, 40.

After having thus effected the deliverance of Germany from both its invaders, the Archduke suggested to the Aulic Council to detach a powerful reinforcement by the Tyrol into Italy, in order to strengthen the army of Alvinzi, and effect the liberation of Wurmser in Mantua—a measure based on true military principles, and which, if adopted by the Imperial government, would probably have changed the fate of the campaign. Moreau, on his side, proposed an armistice to the Austrians, on condition that the Rhine should separate the two armies, and the Republicans retain the *têtes-de-pont* of Huningen and Kehl; a proposal which the Archduke received with secret satisfaction, as it promised him the means of securely carrying into effect his meditated designs for the deliverance of Italy. But the Austrian government, intent upon the expulsion of the French from Germany, and deeming the forces put at the disposal of Alvinzi adequate for the relief of Mantua, declined both propositions, and sent positive orders for the immediate attack of the fortified posts possessed by the Republicans on the right bank of the Rhine.²

61.
The Austrians refuse an armistice.

² Arch. Ch.
ii. 290. Jom.
ix. 238.

The conduct of the siege of Kehl, during the depth of winter, and with an open communication between the

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XXI.

1796.

62.

Long and
bloody siege
of Kehl.

21st Nov.

besieged and the great army on the opposite bank, presented obstacles of no ordinary kind ; but the perseverance and energy of the Austrians ultimately triumphed over all difficulties. Thirty thousand men, under the command of Desaix and St-Cyr, were destined for the defence of the works, while a powerful reserve was stationed in the islands of the Rhine ; and the troops engaged in the defence were changed every three days, to prevent their being overwhelmed with the fatigues of the service. Forty thousand Austrians, under Latour, formed the besieging force, while the remainder of the army was cantoned in the valley of the Rhine. Though the fort was invested on the 9th October, no material progress was made in the siege, from the extreme difficulty of bringing up the battering-train and heavy stores, till the end of November. This long delay gave time to the indefatigable Desaix to complete the defences, which, when the Imperialists first sat down before the place, were in a very unfinished state. The trenches were opened on the 21st November ; and about the same time a grand sortie was attempted, under the command of Moreau in person, to destroy the works, and gain possession of the Austrian park of artillery. This attack was at first successful ; the Republicans carried the intrenchments of Sundheim, and had nearly penetrated to the magazines and parks ; but the Archduke and Latour having coming up with reinforcements to the menaced point, they were at length repulsed with severe loss, though not without carrying with them nine pieces of cannon, which they had captured during the affray. Moreau and Desaix exposed themselves to the hottest of the fire, and were both slightly wounded. After this repulse, the labours of the siege were continued without any other interruption than that arising from the excessive severity of the weather, and the torrents of rain, which, for weeks together, filled the trenches with water. On the night of the 1st January, the Imperialists carried by assault the first line of intrenchments round the Republican camp,

and a few days afterwards the second line was also stormed after a bloody resistance. Kehl was now no longer defensible; above 100,000 cannon-balls, and 25,000 bombs, projected from forty batteries, had riddled all its defences.

The Imperialists, masters of the intrenched camp, enveloped the fort on every side; and the Republicans, after a glorious defence, which does honour to the memory of Desaix and St-Cyr, who directed it, evacuated the place by capitulation on the 9th January.¹

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1796.

¹ Jom. ix.
215, 243.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 298, 310.
St-Cyr, iv.
86, 104, 120.

During the siege of Kehl, the Imperialists remained in observation before the *tête-de-pont* of Huningen; but no sooner were they at liberty, by the surrender of the former place, than they prosecuted the siege of the latter with extraordinary vigour. Ferino had been left with the right wing of the French to superintend the defence of that important post, but notwithstanding all his exertions he was unable to retard their advances; the trenches were opened in form on the 25th of January, and, a sortie having been repulsed on the night of the 31st, the place was evacuated by capitulation on the 1st of February, and the victors found themselves masters of a heap of ruins.²

63.
Fall of the
tête-de-pont
at Hunin-
gen.

² Jom. ix.
221. Arch.
Ch. iii. 315,
323. St-Cyr,
iv. 127,
138.

This last success terminated the campaign of 1796 in Germany—the most remarkable, in a military point of view, which had occurred, with the exception of that of Napoleon in the same year in Italy, since the commencement of the war. The conquerors in both triumphed over superior forces by the application of the same principles—viz. the skilful use of a central position, and interior line of communication, and the rapid accumulation of superior forces against one of the assailing armies, at a time when it was so situated that it could not receive any assistance from the other. The movements of the Archduke between the armies of Moreau and Jourdan, and the ability with which, by bringing a preponderating force against the decisive point, he compelled their vast armies to undertake a disastrous retreat, are precisely parallel to the blows struck by Napoleon from the interior line of the Adige,

64.
Reflections
on this cam-
paign.

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on the converging forces of Quasdanovich and Wurmser on the opposite sides of the lake of Garda; and of Alvinzi and Provera, on the plateau of Rivoli and the shores of the Mincio. The difference only lies in the superior energy and activity with which the Republican general flew from one menaced point to another, the accurate calculation of time on which he rested, and the greater difficulties with which he had to struggle from the closer proximity of the attacking forces to each other.

65.
Errors in
the plan of
the Direc-
tory.

The results of this campaign proved the justice of the observation of Napoleon, that the decisive blows against Austria were to be struck in the valley of the Danube; and that Carnot's plan of turning both flanks of the Imperialists at once, along the vast line from the Maine to the Alps, was essentially defective. In truth, it offered the fairest opportunity to an enterprising general, aware of the importance of time and rapid movement in war, to fall with a preponderating force first on the one and then on the other. If, instead of dispersing the invading host into two armies, separated from each other by above a hundred miles, and acting without concert, he had united them into one mass, or moved them by converging lines towards Ulm, the catastrophe of 1805 to Austria at that place, or of Leipsic in 1813 to France, might have been anticipated with decisive effect upon the issue of the war. And after giving all due praise to the just views and intrepid conduct of the Austrian hero, the deliverer of Germany, it must be admitted that he did not carry his enlightened principles into practice with such vigour as might have been done; and that, had Napoleon been in his place on the Murg and at Amberg, he would have struck as decisive blows as at Medola and Rivoli.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
314, 339.
Th. viii. 419.
Arch. Ch.
iii. 313, 314.

The unsuccessful irruption of the French into Germany was attended with one important consequence, from the effectual manner in which it withdrew the veil from the eyes of the lower classes as to the real nature of democratic ambition, and the consequences with which it was attended

to the inhabitants of the vanquished states. The Republicans, being destitute of everything, and in an especial manner denuded of money, when they crossed the Rhine, immediately put in practice their established principle of making war support war, and oppressed the vanquished people by the most enormous contributions. The lesser German states only purchased neutrality by the heaviest sacrifices.* The people contrasted these cruel exactions with the seductive promises of war to the palace and peace to the cottage; and all learned at length, from bitter experience, the melancholy truth, that military violence, under whatever names it may be veiled, is the same in all ages; and that none are such inexorable tyrants to the poor, as those who have recently revolted against authority in their own country. Although, therefore, the terror of the Republican arms at first superseded every other consideration, and detached all the states whose territory had been overrun from the Austrian alliance, yet this was merely the effect of necessity; the hearts of the people remained faithful to the cause of Germany, their exasperation broke out in unmeasured acts of violence against the retreating forces of Jourdan, and they waited only for the first opportunity to resume their ancient attachment to the Imperial standards.¹

The same causes which thus weakened the predilection of the lower orders in Germany for French principles, operated most powerfully in rousing the ancient and hereditary loyalty of the Austrian people to their own sovereign. When the Republicans approached Bohemia, and had wellnigh penetrated through Bavaria to the

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66.
Prodigious contributions levied by the Republicans in Germany.

¹ Ann. Reg.
135, 143.
Hard. iii.
393.

67.
Noble and patriotic spirit of the Austrian people.

* The Duke of Würtemberg was assessed at 4,000,000 francs, or £160,000 sterling; the circle of Suabia at 12,000,000, or nearly £500,000, besides 8000 horses, 5000 oxen, 150,000 quintals of corn, and 100,000 pairs of shoes. No less than 8,000,000, or £320,000, was demanded from the circle of Franconia, besides 6000 horses; and immense contributions from Frankfort, Würzburg, Bamberg, Nuremberg, and all the towns through which they passed. These enormous exactions, which amounted in all to 25,000,000 francs, (£1,000,000), 12,000 horses, 12,000 oxen, 500,000 quintals of wheat, and 200,000 pairs of shoes, excited universal indignation.

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Hereditary States, the Emperor issued an animating appeal to his subjects in the threatened provinces, and, with the spirit of Maria Theresa, called on them to repel the renewed Gallic aggression. Austria, in this trying emergency, relied on the constant success which has so long attended its house through all the vicissitudes of fortune, and, unsubdued by defeat, maintained that unconquerable spirit which has always characterised its race, and so often is found to triumph over the greatest reverses. The people nobly answered the appeal. The peasants flew to arms; new levies were speedily raised; contributions in stores of every kind were voted by the nobility; and from the first invasion of France may be dated the growth of that patriotic spirit which was destined ultimately to rescue Germany from foreign subjugation.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
134, 135.

68.
New con-
vention
between
France and
Prussia.

This year witnessed the still closer drawing together of the unhappy bands which united Prussia to France, and so long aided to perpetuate on the Continent the overwhelming influence of Gallic power. Hardenberg and Haugwitz, who directed the cabinet of Berlin, and who, notwithstanding their differences on many other points, were cordially united in all measures calculated to augment the influence of Prussia in the north of Germany, had laboured assiduously all the summer to form a federal union for the protection of the states in that portion of the Empire; and they had succeeded in obtaining a convocation of the circle of Lower Saxony and of Westphalia on the 20th June, to arrange the formation of a formidable army of observation, of which Prussia was the head, to cause their neutrality to be respected by the belligerent powers. The French minister at Berlin, artfully improving upon the terrors produced by Napoleon's successes in Italy, and Jourdan's irruption into Franconia, easily persuaded Haugwitz that the period had now arrived when the interests of Prussia indispensably required the breaking up of the old Germanic Empire, and the cession of the left bank of the Rhine as the boundary of France.

In consequence, two conventions, one public, the other secret, were signed at Berlin on the 5th August. By the first, which alone at that time was published, the line of demarcation, beyond which hostilities were not to pass, was extended, and made to run from Wesel on the Rhine, following the frontiers of the mountains of Thuringia, stretching along the North Sea, including the mouths of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Ems, and so round by the frontiers of Holland to Wesel again. Beyond this, in addition to the line already agreed to by the treaty of Bâle, the Directory became bound not to push their military operations. By the second, which was kept secret, Prussia recognised the extension of France to the Rhine; and the principle, that the dispossessed German princes were to be indemnified at the expense of the ecclesiastical princes of the Empire. The third article provided an indemnity to the Prince of Orange, now evidently and apparently finally expelled from his dominions: and Prussia engaged to endeavour for this purpose to procure the secularisation of the bishoprics of Bamberg and Würzburg. "Such was the Secret Convention," says Hardenberg, "which in a manner put the cabinet of Berlin at the mercy of France in the affairs of Germany."¹ It may be added, such was the commencement of that atrocious system of indemnifying the greater states at the expense of the lesser, and satisfying the rapacity of temporal powers by the sacrifice of the Church, which soon after not only shook to its foundation the constitution of the Germanic Empire, but totally overturned the whole balance of power and system of public rights in Europe.

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5th Aug.¹ Hard. iii.
374, 394,
398.

While these important transactions were in progress in the heart of Europe, events of another kind, but not less important in their future effect upon the fate of the war, were preparing upon another element.

Three years of continued success had rendered the British flag omnipotent upon the ocean. Britannia

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69.

Naval operations of the year. Deplorable state of the French marine.

literally ruled the waves: the enemies' colonies successively fell beneath her strokes; and the fleets of France, blockaded in her harbours, were equally unable to protect the commerce of the Republic, or acquire the experience requisite for maritime success. The minister of the marine, Truguet, in proposing a new system for the regulation of the navy, gave a gloomy but faithful picture of its present condition. "The deplorable state of our marine," said he, "is well known to our enemies, who insult us in our very harbours. Our fleets are humiliated, defeated, blockaded in their ports; destitute of provisions and naval equipments; torn by internal faction, weakened by ignorance, ruined by desertion: such is the state in which the men, to whom you have intrusted its direction, have found the French marine." The ruin of the French navy was not the consequence merely of the superior skill and experience of the British sailors; it arose necessarily from the confusion of finances, loss of colonies, and failure of resources, which were the result of the revolutionary convulsion. Fleets cannot be equipped without naval stores, nor navigated but by a body of experienced seamen: it is impossible, therefore, to become a powerful maritime state without a regular revenue and an extensive commerce, both of which had disappeared during the distractions of the Revolution. Severe internal distress, by filling the ranks of the army, may form a formidable military power, and destitute battalions may issue from a convulsed state to plunder and oppress the adjoining nations; but a similar system will never equip a fleet, nor enable a revolutionary to contend with a regular government on the ocean. From the very elements by which the contest was carried on, it was already evident that, though France might defeat the land forces of Europe, Britain would acquire the dominion of the waves.¹

¹ *Jom. ix.*
225.

The hostilities carried on by the naval and military forces of Great Britain in the West and East Indies, were attended with the most decisive success. The island of

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70.

Successes of
the British
in the West
and East
Indies.
August.

Granada, which had long been in a state of revolt, yielded to the perseverance and ability of General Nicols: Ste Lucie was reduced in May by General Abercromby, and Essequibo and Demerara by General White; while the French could only set off against these losses the destruction of the merchandise and shipping at Newfoundland by Admiral Richery. In the Indian seas, the successes of the British were still more important. A Dutch squadron of three ships of the line, three frigates, and many vessels of inferior size, having on board two thousand land troops, destined to retake the Cape of Good Hope, was captured by Admiral Elphinstone in the bay of Saldanha; while the Batavian settlements of Ceylon, the Malaccas, and Cochin, with the important harbour of Trincomalee, were, early in the year, taken possession of by the British forces. Thus was the foundation laid, in both hemispheres, of the colonial empire of Great Britain, which has subsequently grown up to such an extraordinary magnitude, and promises, in its ultimate results, to exert a greater and more wide-spread influence on mankind than any which has been effected by human agency, since the Roman legions ceased to conquer and civilise the world.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
194. Jom.
ix. 240.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
240, 252.

These important successes, particularly the reduction of the Cape, formerly detailed, that of Ceylon, and the Malaccas, diffused general joy through the British nation. It was justly observed, that the first was a half-way-house to India, and indispensable to the mighty empire which we had acquired in the plains of Hindostan; while the last secured the emporium of the China trade, and opened up the vast commerce of the Indian Archipelago. The attention of the people, by these great acquisitions, began to be turned towards the probable result and final issue of the war: they looked to the conquests of the British at sea, as likely to counterbalance the acquisitions of the Republicans at land. They observed that Rhodes long maintained a doubtful contest with Rome after its land forces

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General joy
which these
successes
diffused in
Britain.

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had subdued Spain, Carthage, and part of Gaul; and that, in a similar contest, Great Britain would have incomparably greater chances of success than the Grecian commonwealth, from the superior internal strength which the population of its own islands afforded, and the far more extensive commerce which enriched it from every quarter of the globe. "Athens," said Xenophon, "would have prevailed over Lacedæmon, if Attica had been an island inaccessible save by water to the land forces of its opponent;" and it was impossible not to see that nature had given that advantage to the modern, which she had denied to the ancient maritime power. The formation of a great colonial empire, embracing all the quarters of the globe, held together and united by the naval power of Britain, and enriching the parent state by its commerce, and the market it would open for its manufactures, began to engage the thoughts not only of statesmen, but of practical men; and the Cape and Ceylon were spoken of as acquisitions which should never be abandoned.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
195. Jom.
ix. 241.

72.
Continued
deplorable
state of St
Domingo.

St Domingo still continued in the distracted and unfortunate state into which it had been thrown by the visionary dreams of the French Republicans, and the frightful flames of a servile war which had been lighted up by their extravagant philanthropists. All the efforts, both of the French and British, to restore anything like order among its furious and savage population, had proved unsuccessful. The latter had never been in sufficient force to make any serious impression on its numerous and frantic inhabitants; and the former were hardly able to retain a scanty footing in the northern part of the island, far less to attempt to regain the splendid and prosperous colony which they had lost. The blacks, taught by experience, perfectly acquainted with the country, and comparatively unaffected by its climate, maintained a successful contest with European forces, who melted away more rapidly under its fatal evening gales, than either by the ravages of

famine or the sword of the enemy. Toussaint had already risen to eminence in the command of these desultory forces, and was taken into the French service with the division he had organised, in the vain attempt to re-establish the sinking authority of the Republican commissioners.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
192, 193.
Jom. 230,
240.

Notwithstanding the disastrous state of the principal colony of France, and the great losses which she had sustained in her maritime possessions, Great Britain showed herself disposed during this year to make great sacrifices to her, to obtain a general peace. In truth, notwithstanding her naval successes, the situation of Britain, from the disasters of her allies, had become sufficiently alarming. Spain, detached by the treaty of Bâle from all connexion with the Allies, had lately fallen under the Republican influence, and yielded to that jealousy of the British naval power which is so easily excited among the European states. The Directory, artfully improving these advantages, had fanned the Spanish discontents into a flame, by holding out hopes of some acquisitions in Italy, won by the sword of Napoleon, in case they joined the Republican alliance. Influenced by these considerations, the Spaniards fell into the snare, from which they were destined hereafter to experience such disastrous effects; and, on the 19th August, concluded a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with France, on the footing of the family compact. By this treaty, the powers mutually guaranteed to each other their dominions both in the Old and the New World, and engaged to assist each other, in case of attack, with twenty-four thousand land troops, thirty ships of the line, and six frigates. This was followed, in the beginning of October, by a formal declaration of war, on the part of Spain, against Great Britain.² Thus Britain, which had commenced the war with so many confederates, saw herself not only deprived of all her maritime allies, but the whole coasts of Europe, from

73.

Treaty of
St Ildefonso
between
France and
Spain.

19th Aug.

2d Oct.
² Th. viii.
251, 252.
Ann. Reg.
2, Martens,
vi. 255.

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74.

Overture
for a general
peace made
by Great
Britain,
which
proves un-
successful.

the Texel to Gibraltar, arrayed in fierce hostility against her.*

Impressed with these dangers, and desirous also of disarming the numerous and powerful party in Great Britain, who contended against the war as both unnecessary and impolitic, Mr Pitt, in the close of this year, made overtures for a general peace to the French government. Lord Malmesbury was despatched to Paris to open the negotiations; but it is probable that no great hopes of their success were entertained, as, nearly at the same time, an alliance was concluded with Russia, for the aid of sixty thousand auxiliary troops to the Austrian forces. The British envoy arrived at Paris on the 22d October, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, and proposals of peace were immediately made through him. These were, the recognition of the Republic by

5th Oct.

* Many grounds of complaint were assigned in the Spanish manifesto on this occasion; but they met with a decisive refutation from the British cabinet, in an able state-paper, drawn up by Mr Canning. It was urged by the Spanish court, that the conduct of the British during the war, but especially at the siege of Toulon, and in the expedition to Quiberon, had determined the cabinet of Madrid to make peace with France as soon as it could be done with safety to the monarchy; that the bad faith of the British government further appeared in the treaty of 19th November 1794, concluded, without regard to the rights of Spain, with the United States, in the injustice with which they seized the St Jago, at first taken by the French, but afterwards retaken by the English, which, by the subsisting convention, ought to have been restored, and in the intercepting of ammunition for the Spanish squadrons; that the crews of her ships had frequently landed on the coast of Chili, and carried on a contraband trade, as well as reconnoitred these valuable possessions, and had evinced a clear intention of seizing part of the Spanish colonial territories, by sending a considerable force to the Antilles and St Domingo, and by her recent acquisition of the Dutch settlement of Demerara; that frequent insults and acts of violence had been committed by the British cruisers upon Spanish vessels in the Mediterranean; that the Spanish territory had been violated by descents from British ships on the coast of Galicia and at Trinidad: and, finally, that the majesty of Spain had been insulted by the decrees of a court in London, authorising the arrest of its ambassador for a small sum. "By all those insults," it concluded, "equally deep and unparalleled, that nation has proved to the universe, that she recognises no other laws than the aggrandisement of her commerce; and by her despotism, which has exhausted our patience and moderation, has rendered a declaration of war unavoidable."¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxviii. 193.
State Papers.

To this manifesto, the acrimonious style of which too clearly betrayed the quarter from which it had proceeded, it was replied by the British government, that "the unprovoked declaration of war on the part of Spain had at

the British government, and the restitution of all the colonies to France and Holland, which had been conquered since the commencement of the war. In return for these concessions, they insisted that the French should restore the Low Countries to the Emperor, Holland to the Stadtholder, and evacuate all their conquests in Italy, but they were to retain Luxembourg, Namur, Nice, and Savoy. It was hardly to be expected that the Republican government, engaged in so dazzling a career of victory as they had recently followed in Italy, and entirely dependent on popular favour, would consent to these terms, or that they could have maintained their place at the head of affairs, if they had submitted to them.¹ Accordingly, after the negotiations had been continued for two months, they were abruptly broken off, by the Directory ordering Lord Malmesbury to quit Paris in

27th Dec.
¹ Jom. ix.
 149, 246.
 Ann. Reg.
 191, and
 State Pa-
 pers, 176,
 177. Hard.
 iv. 106, 110.
 Malmsh. ii.
 163, 209.

length compelled the King of England to take measures to assert the dignity of his crown: that a simple reference to the Spanish declaration, and a bare enumeration of the frivolous charges which it contains, must be sufficient to satisfy every reasonable and impartial person that no part of the conduct of Great Britain towards Spain has afforded the smallest ground of complaint. The acts of hostility attributed to England, consist either of matters perfectly innocent, or of imputed opinions and intentions, of which no proof is adduced, nor effect alleged, or of complaints of the misconduct of unauthorised individuals, concerning which his Majesty has always professed his willingness to institute inquiry, and grant redress, where it was really due. The charge of misconduct on the part of the British admiral at Toulon is unprecedented and absurd; and this is perhaps the first instance that it has been imputed as a crime to one of the commanding officers of two powers, acting in alliance, and making a common cause in war, that he did more than his proportion of mischief to the common enemy. The treaty with America did nothing more than what every independent power has a right to do, or than his Spanish Majesty has since that time himself done; and inflicted no injury whatever on the subjects of that monarchy. The claims of all parties in regard to the condemnation of the *St Jago*, captured by his Majesty's forces, were fully heard before the only competent tribunal, and one whose impartiality is above all suspicion. The alleged misconduct of some merchant-ships, in landing their crews on the coast of Chili and Peru, forms no legitimate ground of complaint against the British government; and, even if some irregularities had been committed, they might have been punished on the spot, or the courts of London were always ready to receive and redress complaints of that description.

"In regard to the expedition of *St Domingo* and *Demerara*, with all the regard which he feels to the rights of neutral powers, it is a new and unheard-of extension of neutral rights which is to be restricted by no limits, and is to attach not to the territories of a neutral power itself, but to whatever may once have belonged to it, and to whatever may be situated in its neighbour-

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twenty-four hours, and he immediately returned to his own country. But it must ever be a matter of pride to the British historian, that the power which had been uniformly victorious on its own element, should have offered to treat on terms of equality with that from which it had so little to dread; and that Britain, to procure favourable terms for her allies, was willing to have abandoned all her own acquisitions.

While these negotiations were yet pending, a measure was undertaken by the French government, which placed Britain in the utmost peril, and from which she was saved rather by the winds of heaven than by any exertions of her own. It was the extravagant expectations they had formed of success from this operation, which led to the long delay and final rupture of the negotiation.¹

¹ Hard. iv.
107.

hood, though in the actual possession of an enemy. The complaint in regard to St Domingo is peculiarly unfortunate, as the cession of part of that island, by the recent treaty from Spain to France, is a breach of that solemn treaty under which alone the crown of Spain holds any part of its American possessions. Such an act would at once have justified any measures of retaliation on the part of the British government; but so earnest was their desire to maintain peace, that they repeatedly endeavoured to ascertain when the Spanish right to the ceded territory was to terminate, in order that their efforts might be directed against the French alone. Some irregularities in the course of so long and vast a contest may have been committed by the British cruizers in the exercise of the undoubted right of search enjoyed by every belligerent state; but to the readiness of the British government to grant redress, in every case where an injury has been committed, even Spain herself can bear testimony. The complaint regarding the alleged decree against the Spanish ambassador, is, if possible, still more frivolous, that being nothing more than a simple citation to answer for a debt demanded, the mistaken act of an individual who was immediately disavowed and prosecuted by the government, and made repeated but vain submissive applications to the Spanish ambassador for forgiveness, such as in all former cases had been deemed satisfactory.

"It will be plain to posterity, it is now notorious to Europe, that neither to the genuine wishes, nor even the mistaken policy of Spain, is her present conduct to be attributed; that not from enmity towards Great Britain, not from any resentment of past, or apprehension of future injuries, but from a blind subservience to the views of his Majesty's enemies; from the dominion usurped over her councils and actions by her new allies, she has been compelled to act in a quarrel, and for interests, not her own; to take up arms against one of those powers in whose cause she had professed to feel the strongest interest, and to menace with hostility another, against whom no cause of complaint is pretended, but an honourable adherence to its engagements."—*Ann. Reg.* 1796, 147; *State Papers*.

Ireland, long the victim of oppressive government and barbaric indolence, and now convulsed by popular passion, was at this period in a state of unusual excitement. The successful issue of the French Revolution had stimulated the numerous needy and ardent characters in that distracted nation to project a similar revolt against the authority of England; and above two hundred thousand men, in all parts of the country, were engaged in a vast conspiracy for overturning the established government, and erecting a democracy, after the model of France, in its stead. Overlooking the grinding misery which the convulsions of the Republic had occasioned to its inhabitants; without considering how an insular power, detached from the Continent, and with no habits of industry or accumulated wealth to support the contest from its own resources, was to maintain itself against the naval forces of Britain, the patriots of Ireland rushed blindly into the project, with that ardent but inconsiderate zeal and inveterate rancour against the British government for which the people of that country have always been distinguished. The malcontents were enrolled under generals, colonels, and officers, in all the counties: arms were secretly provided; leaders and rallying-points universally chosen; and nothing was wanting but the arrival of the French troops to proclaim the insurrection in every part of the country. Their design was to break off the connexion with Britain, confiscate every shilling of British property in Ireland, and form a Hibernian Republic in close alliance with the great parent democracy at Paris. With such secrecy were the preparations made, that the British government had but an imperfect account of its danger; while the French Directory, accurately informed by its emissaries of what was going forward, was fully prepared to turn it to the best account.¹*

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75.
Alarming
state of Ire-
land.

¹ Hard. ii.
187, 189.
Th. viii.
352, 486.
Moore's
Fitz-Ger-
ald, i. 275,
300. Vict.
et Conq. vii.
264, 268.

* The intentions of the Irish revolutionists, and the length to which they had in secret carried their preparations for the formation of a Hibernian Republic, will be best understood from the following passages, in a memorial

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Designs of
the Direc-
tory and
Hoche
against that
country.

Hoche, at the head of a hundred thousand men, on the shores of the ocean, in la Vendée and Brittany, burned with the desire to eclipse the great exploits of Napoleon and Moreau against the Imperial forces. Ireland offered a theatre worthy of his army and his reputation; and, by striking a decisive blow against the British power in that quarter, he had an opportunity of crippling the ancient rival of France, and achieving greater benefits for his country than either the victory of Fleurus or the triumphs of Rivoli. Truguet, the minister of marine, seconded him warmly with all his influence; and by their joint exertions an expedition was quickly prepared at Brest, more formidable than could have been anticipated from the dilapidated state of the French navy. It consisted of fifteen ships of the line, on board each of which were embarked six hundred soldiers, twelve frigates and six corvettes, each carrying two hundred and fifty men, and a number of transports and other vessels,¹ conveying in all twenty-five

¹ Ann. Reg.
193. Th.
viii. 353,
486, 487.
Jom. ix.
250. Hard.
iv. 107.
Vict. et
Cong. vii.
273, 275.

presented by Wolfe Tone, one of their principal leaders, to the French Directory.

"The Catholics of Ireland are 3,150,000, all trained from their infancy in a *hereditary hatred and abhorrence of the English name*. For these five years they have fixed their eyes most earnestly on France, whom they look upon, with great justice, as fighting their battles, as well as those of all mankind who are oppressed. Of this class, I will stake my head there are 500,000 men who would fly to the standard of the Republic, if they saw it once displayed in the cause of liberty and their country.

"The Republic may also rely with confidence on the support of the Dissenters, actuated by reason and reflection, as well as the Catholics, impelled by misery and influenced by detestation of the English name. In the year 1791, the Dissenters of Belfast first formed the club of United Irishmen—so called, because in that club, for the first time, Dissenters and Catholics were seen together in harmony and union. Corresponding clubs were rapidly formed, the object of which was to subvert the tyranny of England, *establish the independence of Ireland, and frame a free republic on the broad basis of liberty and equality*. These clubs were rapidly filled, and extended in June last over two-thirds of that province. Their members are all bound by an oath of secrecy, and could, I have not the smallest doubt, on a proper occasion, raise the entire force of the province of Ulster, the most populous, warlike, and best informed in the nation.

"The Catholics also have an organisation commencing about the same time with the clubs last mentioned, but composed of Catholics only. Until within these few months this organisation baffled the utmost vigilance of the Irish government, unsuccessfully applied to discover its principles; and to this hour they are, I believe, unapprised of its extent. The fact is, that, in June last, it

thousand land forces. This armament was to be joined by seven ships of the line, under Richery, from the harbour of Rochefort. The troops were the best in Hoche's army: the general-in-chief was sanguine of success; and such were the hopes entertained of the result of the expedition, that the Directory transmitted orders for it to sail several weeks before Lord Malmesbury left Paris, and their expectations of its achievements were the principal motive for breaking off the negotiation.

To distract the attention of the enemy, the most inconsistent accounts were spread as to the object of the expedition; sometimes, that it was destined for the West Indies; at others, for the shores of Portugal; but, notwithstanding these artifices, the British government readily discerned where the blow was really intended to be struck. Orders were transmitted to Ireland to have the militia in readiness; a vigilant watch was kept up on the coasts; and directions were given that, in the event of a descent being

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Measures to
deceive the
British gov-
ernment,
and their
defensive
prepara-
tions.

embraced the whole peasantry of the provinces of Ulster, Leinster, and Connaught, three-fourths of the nation, and I have little doubt that it has since extended into Munster, the remaining province. These men, who are called Defenders, are completely organised on a military plan, divided according to their respective districts, and officered by men chosen by themselves: the principle of their union is implicit obedience to the orders of those whom they have elected as their generals, and whose object is the emancipation of their country, the subversion of English usurpation, and the bettering the condition of the wretched peasantry of Ireland. The eyes of this whole body, which may be said almost without a figure to be the people of Ireland, are turned with the most anxious expectation to France for assistance and support. The oath of their union recites, 'that they will be faithful to the *united nations of France and Ireland*,' and several of them have already sealed it with their blood. I suppose there is no conspiracy, if a whole people can be said to conspire, which has continued for so many years as this has done, where the secret has been so religiously kept, and where in so vast a number so few traitors are to be found.

"There is also a further organisation of the Catholics, which is called the General Committee, a representative body chosen by the Catholics at large, which decides the movements of the cit, of Dublin, and possesses a very great influence on the minds of the Catholics throughout the nation. I can add, from my personal knowledge, that a great majority of the able and honest men who compose it are sincere Republicans, warmly attached to the cause of France, and, as Irishmen and as Catholics, doubly bound to detest the tyranny and domination of England, which has often deluged the country with their best blood.

"The militia are about eighteen thousand strong, as fine men as any in

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effected, all the cattle and provisions should be driven into the interior—precautions which in the end proved unnecessary, but which were dictated by a prudent foresight, and gave the French government an idea of the species of resistance which they might expect in the event of such an invasion being really effected. But, notwithstanding all these preparations, the most serious apprehensions were entertained by the strongest heads in Britain, as to the consequences of the landing of any considerable French force in Ireland. “Without,” said Lord Wellesley at the time, “being prejudiced by the deep stake I have in Ireland, I think I may say, that to neglect the defence of *that* country is to insure the conquest of this, with all its attendant horrors of revolution and pillage. A revolution in Ireland would be the infallible consequence of the landing of even a small French force in that country, and then what sort of neighbour would Ireland become?¹ My gloomy apprehensions are the result of serious and deli-

¹ Jom. ix. 253. Th. viii. 485. Ann. Reg. 198, 199. Fellow's Life of Sidmouth, i. 174.

Europe. Of these sixteen thousand are Catholics, and of those a very great proportion are sworn Defenders. I have not a shadow of doubt that the militia would, in cases of emergency, to a man, join their countrymen in throwing off the yoke of England.”—*First Memorial delivered to the French Directory, Feb. 1796, by WOLFE TONE.*—*Wolfe Tone's Memoirs*, ii. 187-188-191.

“It would be just as easy, in a month's time, to have an army in Ireland of two hundred thousand as ten thousand. The peasantry would flock to the Republican standard in such numbers as to embarrass the general-in-chief. A proclamation should instantly be issued, containing an invitation to the people to join the Republican standard, organise themselves, and *form a National Convention for the purpose of framing a government*, and administering the affairs of Ireland till it was put in activity.

“The first act of the Convention thus constituted should be, to declare themselves the representatives of the Irish people, free and independent, and in that capacity to *form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the French Republic*, stipulating that neither party should make peace with England till the two Republics were acknowledged.

“The Convention should next publish a proclamation, *notifying their independence and their alliance with the French Republic, forbidding all adherence to the British government*, under the penalty of high treason, ordering all taxes and contributions to be paid only to such persons as should be appointed by the provisional government. Another to the militia, recalling them to the standard of their country: and another to the Irishmen in the navy, recalling them directly from that service; and this should be followed by another, *confiscating every shilling of English property in Ireland of every species, moveable or fixed*, and appropriating it to the national service.”—WOLFE TONE, *Second Memorial addressed to the French Directory.* *Wolfe Tone's Memoirs*, ii. 197, 201.

berate reflection; and my great fear is a blow in Ireland before sufficient preparation has been made for our defence in that most vulnerable, and, at the same time, mortal part."*

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The expedition set sail in the middle of December, two days before the negotiation was broken off at Paris; but it encountered disasters from the very moment of its leaving the harbour. A violent tempest arose immediately after its departure; and though the mist with which it was accompanied enabled the French admiral to elude the vigilance of the British squadron, yet one ship of the line struck on the rocks near the isle of Ushant and was lost; several were damaged, and the fleet was totally dispersed. This tempestuous weather continued the whole time the fleet was at sea: Hoche himself, who was on board a frigate, was separated from the remainder of his squadron; and, after a stormy passage, a part of the expedition reached the point of rendezvous, in Bantry Bay, eight days after its departure from the French harbour. Admiral Bouvet, the second in command, resolved to land the troops, although only eight ships of the line, and some of the transports, were assembled, having on board six thousand land forces. But the violence of the tempest, and the prodigious swell of the sea on that iron-bound coast, rendered that impossible; and the crew of a boat, which was sent through the surf to reconnoitre, were speedily made prisoners by the numerous bodies of armed men who appeared on the beach to oppose a landing. Dispirited by such a succession of disasters, unwilling to undertake the responsibility of hazarding a part only of the land forces in the absence of the general-in-chief, and apprehensive that provisions for the crews of the vessels would fail, from the long time that they had been at sea, Bouvet resolved to make the best of his way back to the French harbours. He set sail accordingly, and had the good fortune to reach Brest on the last day of December, whither he was soon

78.

The expedition sets sail, and is dispersed by tempests.
15th Dec.

24th Dec.

31st Dec.

* Lord Wellesley to Mr Pitt, Sept. 4, 1796; PELLEW's *Life of Sidmouth*, i. 174.

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¹ Ann. Reg.
198. Th.
viii. 489,
490. Jom.
ix. 252.
Vict. et
Conq. vii.
274, 291.

followed by the scattered divisions of his fleet, after two ships of the line and three frigates had been lost; one of the former by the violence of the elements, and the other by the attacks of the British. Hoche himself, after escaping a thousand perils, was landed on the island of Rhé; and the Directory, abandoning the expedition for the present, moved the greater part of his forces to the Rhine, to replace the losses of Jourdan's army, to the command of which they destined him.¹

79.
Reflections
on the fail-
ure of this
expedition.

Such was the issue of this expedition, which had so long kept Great Britain in suspense, and revealed to its enemies the vulnerable quarter in which it might be attacked with the greatest chance of success. Its result was pregnant with important instruction to the rulers of both countries. To the French, as demonstrating the extraordinary risks which attend an expedition by sea in comparison with a land campaign; the small number of forces which can be embarked on board even a great fleet, and the unforeseen disasters which frequently on the former element defeat the best-concerted enterprises. To the British, as showing that the empire of the seas does not always afford security against invasion; that, in the face of superior maritime forces, her possessions had been for sixteen days at the mercy of the enemy, and that neither the skill of her sailors, nor the valour of her armies, but the fury of the elements, had saved them from danger in the most vulnerable part of their dominions. While these considerations are fitted to abate the confidence of the invader, they are calculated at the same time to weaken an overweening reliance on naval superiority; and to demonstrate, that the only defence on which certain trust can be placed, even by an insular power, is a well-disciplined army, and the patriotism of its own subjects.

It is a curious subject for speculation, what might have been the result had Hoche succeeded in landing with twenty-five thousand of his best troops on the Irish shores. To those who consider, indeed, the patriotic

spirit, indomitable valour, and persevering character of the British people, and the complete command they had of the sea, the final issue of such a contest cannot appear doubtful; but it is equally evident that the addition of such a force, and so able a commander, to the prodigious and organised body of Irish malcontents, would have engendered a dreadful domestic war, and that the whole energies of the empire might for a very long period have been employed in saving itself from dismemberment. When it is recollected, also, how widely the spirit of discontent was diffused even through the population of Great Britain at that period, in what a formidable manner it soon after broke out in the mutiny at the Nore, and what serious financial embarrassments were already pressing upon the treasury, and preparing the crisis which led to the suspension of cash payments in the following spring, it must be admitted that the nation then stood upon the edge of an abyss; and that, if ever Providence interferes in human affairs otherwise than by the energy which it infuses into the cause of justice, and the moral laws to which the deeds of free agents are rendered subservient, its protection never appeared in so remarkable a manner to the British islands since the winds and the waves, two hundred years before, dispersed the Spanish Armament. With truth was it said at the time—"The goodness of Providence to us has exhibited a second Armada. Once more wrote Lord Rivers, 'Efflavit Deus et dissipantur.'"¹

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80.
Probable
conse-
quences if
the expedi-
tion had
effected a
landing.¹ Pellew's
Sidmouth,
i. 181.

The close of this year was marked by the death of the Empress Catherine, and the accession of the Emperor Paul to the Russian throne; an event of no small importance to the future fate of the war and destiny of the world. Shortly before her death, she had by art and flattery contrived to add Courland to her immense dominions. She had recently made herself mistress of Derbend in Persia; and the alliance with Great Britain and Austria secured to her the concurrence of these

81.
Death of the
Empress
Catherine.
10th Nov.

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powers in her favourite project of dismembering the Turkish dominions, and placing her youngest son on the throne of Constantine. She thus seemed to be fast approaching the grand object of her desire, and might have lived to see the cross planted on the dome of St Sophia, when death interrupted all her schemes of ambition, in the sixty-seventh year of her age, and the thirty-sixth of her reign. Her latest project was the formation of a powerful confederacy for the defence of Europe against the French Republic; and she had given orders for the levy of a hundred and fifty thousand men, intended to take a part in the German campaigns—a design which, if carried into effect by her firm and intrepid hand, might have accelerated, by nearly twenty years, the catastrophe which closed the war.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
200, 202.

82.
Her character.

Few sovereigns will occupy a more conspicuous place in the page of history, or have left, as regards their conduct on the throne, a more marked reputation. Prudent in council, and intrepid in conduct; cautious in forming resolutions, but vigorous in carrying them into execution: ambitious, but of great and splendid objects only; passionately fond of glory, without the alloy, at least in public affairs, of sordid or vulgar inclinations; discerning in the choice of her counsellors, and swayed in matters of state generally by lofty intellects; munificent in public, liberal in private, firm in resolution, unwearied in purpose, she dignified a despotic throne by the magnanimity and patriotism of a more virtuous age. But these great qualities were counterbalanced by as remarkable vices—and more truly perhaps of her than of the Virgin Queen of England it might be said, in Burleigh's words, "that if to-day she was more than man, to-morrow she would be less than woman." Vehement, sensual, and capricious in private life, she seemed, as a woman, to live only for the gratification of her passions; her successive lovers, under the name of favourites, formed as regular a part of her establishment as her ministers of state, and received

a much larger share of her revenues: tyrannical, overbearing, and sometimes cruel in her administration, she filled her subjects with unbounded awe for her authority. Like Henry VIII. of England, she spared neither man in her lust, nor woman in her hate. She was not always able to withstand the influence of her favourites in affairs of state; they were frequently selected from the officers of her guard, for no other quality but personal beauty, and many of the worst acts of her government may be traced to their ascendancy. In the lustre of her administration, however, the career of her victories, and the rapid progress of her subjects under so able a government, mankind forgot her dissolute manners, the occasional elevation of unworthy minions, frequent acts of tyranny, and the bloody deeds which signalised her accession to the throne: they overlooked the frailties of the woman in the dignity of the princess; and paid to the abilities and splendour of the Semiramis of the North that involuntary homage which commanding qualities on the throne never fail to secure, even when stained by irregularities in private life.*

The end of the same year witnessed the resignation of the presidency of the United States of America by General Washington, and his voluntary retirement into

* The elegant flattery of France applied to the Empress the noble lines of Voltaire in the *Sémiramis*, perhaps written with that very view:

“Que de Sémiramis les beaux jours pleins de gloire
Effacent ce moment heureux ou malheureux
Qui d'un fatal hymen brisa le joug affreux.
Ninus, en vous chassant de son lit et du trône,
En vous perdant, madame, eût perdu Babylone,
Pour le bien des mortels vous prévintes ses coups,
Babylone et la terre avaient besoin de vous:
Et quinze ans de vertus et de travaux utiles,
Les arides deserts par vous rendus fertiles,
Les sauvages humains soumis au frein des lois,
Les arts dans nos cités naissant à votre voix,
Ces hardis monumens que l'univers admire,
Les acclamations de ce puissant empire,
Sont autant de témoins dont le cri glorieux
A déposé pour vous au tribunal des dieux.”

Sémiramis, Act I. scene 5.

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83.

Retirement
of Washing-
ton from
public life.
His perfect
character,
and admi-
rable vale-
dictory
address to
his coun-
trymen.
17th Sept.

private life. Modern history has not a more spotless character to commemorate. Invincible in resolution, firm in conduct, incorruptible in integrity, he brought to the helm of a victorious republic the simplicity and innocence of rural life; he was forced into greatness by circumstances rather than led into it by inclination, and prevailed over his enemies rather by the wisdom of his designs, and the perseverance of his character, than by any extraordinary genius for the art of war. A soldier from necessity and patriotism rather than disposition, he was the first to recommend a return to pacific counsels when the independence of his country was secured; and bequeathed to his countrymen an address on leaving their government, to which there are few compositions of uninspired wisdom which can bear a comparison.* He was modest without diffidence; sensible to the voice of fame without vanity; independent and dignified without either asperity or pride.¹ He was a friend to liberty, but not to licentiousness—not to the dreams of enthusiasts, but to those practical ideas which America had inherited from her British descent, and which were opposed to nothing so much as the extravagant love of power in the French democracy. Accordingly, after having signalised his life by successful resistance to English oppression, he

¹ See Ann.
Reg. 1796.
State Pa-
pers, 293.

* This great man observes, in that admirable composition: "Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanence of your present happy state, it is requisite not only that you discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the prettexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of government, as of other human institutions; that experiment is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the mere credit of hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society

closed it by the warmest advice to cultivate the friendship of Great Britain; and exerted his whole influence, shortly before his resignation, to effect the conclusion of a treaty of friendly and commercial intercourse between the mother country and its emancipated offspring. He was a Cromwell without his ambition; a Sylla without his crimes: and, after having raised his country, by his exertions, to the rank of an independent state, he closed his career by a voluntary relinquishment of the power which a grateful people had bestowed. If it is the highest glory of England to have given birth, even amidst Transatlantic wilds, to such a man; and if she cannot number him among those who have extended her provinces or augmented her dominions, she may at least feel a legitimate pride in the victories which he achieved, and the great qualities which he exhibited, in the contest with herself; and indulge with satisfaction in the reflection, that that vast empire, which neither the ambition of Louis XIV. nor the power of Napoleon could dismember, received its first shock from the courage which she had communicated to her own offspring; and that, amidst the convulsions and revolutions of other states, real liberty has arisen in that nation alone, which inherited in its veins the genuine principles of British freedom.

within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

"Let me now warn you, in the most solemn manner, against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally. It is, unfortunately, inseparable from our nature, having its roots in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or oppressed, but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness, and it is truly their worst enemy. The alternate dominion of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party discussion, which, in different ages and countries, has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a most horrid despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of a single individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this despotism to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty." What words, to be spoken by the founder of the American Republic, the refuser of the American crown, at a time when the career of Napoleon had just commenced in Europe!—See *Ann. Reg.* xxxviii. 298; *State Papers*.

CHAPTER XXII.

INTERNAL TRANSACTIONS AND NAVAL CAMPAIGN OF
GREAT BRITAIN IN 1797.CHAP.
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1.
Evident
approach of
a crisis in
the war.

ALTHOUGH the war had now continued four years, and it was obvious to all the world that Britain and France were the principals in the contest, yet these two states had not as yet come into immediate and violent collision. Inferior powers required to be struck down, weaker states to be removed from the field, before the leaders of the fight dealt their blows at each other ; like the champions of chivalry, who were separated in the commencement of the affray by subordinate knights, and did not engage in mortal conflict till the field was covered with the dead and the dying. The period, however, was now approaching, when this could no longer continue, for the successes of France had been such as to compel Britain to fight, not merely for victory, but for existence. All the allies with whom, and for whose protection, she had engaged in the contest, were either struggling in the extremity of disaster, or openly arrayed under the banners of her enemies. Austria, after a desperate and heroic resistance in Italy, was preparing for the defence of her last barriers in the passes of the Alps. Holland was virtually incorporated with the conquering Republic. Spain had recently joined its forces to its already overwhelming power. The whole Continent, from the Texel to Gibraltar, was arrayed against Great Britain ; and all men were sensible that, in

spite of her maritime superiority, she had in the preceding winter narrowly escaped invasion in the most vulnerable quarter, and owed to the winds and the waves her exemption from the horrors of civil war.

The aspect of public affairs in Britain had never been so clouded since the commencement of the war, nor indeed during the whole of the 18th century, as they were at the opening of the year 1797. The return of Lord Malmesbury from Paris had closed every hope of terminating a contest, in which the national burdens were daily increasing, while the prospect of success was continually diminishing. Party spirit raged with uncommon violence in every part of the empire. Insurrections prevailed in many districts of Ireland, discontent and suffering in all. Commercial embarrassments were rapidly increasing, especially in the commercial towns and manufacturing districts of Great Britain; and the continued pressure on the Bank of England in consequence of the vast exportation of the precious metals for the use of the Continental armies, and the general tendency to hoard which the dread of invasion had occasioned at home, threatened a total overthrow of public credit. The consequence of this accumulation of disasters was a rapid fall of the public securities; the three per cents were sold as low as 51, having fallen to that from 98, at which they stood shortly before the commencement of the contest in 1792; petitions for a change of ministers and an alteration of government were presented from almost every city of note in the empire, and that general distrust and depression prevailed which is at once the cause and the effect of public misfortune.¹

The first of these disasters was one which, in a despotic state unacquainted with the unlimited confidence in government that, in a free state, results from long-continued fidelity in the discharge of its engagements, would have proved fatal to the credit of government. For a long period the Bank had experienced a pressure for

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2.

Gloomy
aspect of
public
affairs in
Britain in
the begin-
ning of 1797.

¹ Ann. Reg.
148, 149,
1797.

3.

Crisis of the
Bank, and
Order in
Council
suspending
cash pay-
ments.

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1797.

money, owing partly to the demand for gold and silver which resulted from the distresses of commerce, and partly to the great drains upon the specie of the country, which the extensive loans to the Imperial government had occasioned, and the vast expenditure of the Republican and Austrian armies in Italy and Germany had required. Their requisitions and contributions, all of which required to be paid in cash, occasioned a prodigious demand for the precious metals on the Continent, and gave rise of course to a corresponding drain on this country. So early as January 1795, the influence of these causes was so severely felt, that the Bank Directors informed the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was their wish that he would so arrange his finances as not to depend on any further assistance from them; but the necessity of remitting the subsidies to Austria in cash rendered this impossible. It proved, however, such a drain upon the Bank, that, during the whole of that and the following year, the peril of the continued advances for the Imperial loans was strongly and earnestly represented to government. The pressure arising from these causes, severely experienced through the whole of 1796, was brought to a crisis in the close of that year, by the run upon the country banks, which arose from the dread of invasion, and the anxiety of every man to convert his paper into cash in the troubled times which seemed to be approaching. These banks, as the only means of averting bankruptcy, applied from all quarters to the Bank of England; the panic speedily gained the metropolis, and such was the run upon that establishment, that it was in the last week of February reduced to paying in sixpences, and was on the verge of insolvency. An Order in Council was then, at the eleventh hour, interposed for its relief, suspending all payments in cash, until the sense of Parliament could be taken upon the best means of restoring the circulation, and supporting the public and commercial credit of the country.¹

26th Feb.

¹ Ann. Reg.
179-180.

This great and momentous measure, fraught with such lasting and important consequences to the prosperity and fabric of society in Great Britain, was immediately made the subject of anxious and vehement debate in both Houses of Parliament. On the one hand, it was urged that this suspension of credit was not owing to any temporary disasters, but to deep, progressive, and accumulating causes, which all thinking men had long deplored, and which had grown to a head under the unhappy confidence which the House had reposed in the King's ministers; that the real cause of this calamity was to be found in the excessive and extravagant expenditure in all departments of government, and the enormous loans to foreign states; that the consequences of this measure were certain, and might be seen as in a mirror in the adjoining Republic of France. They necessarily produced a constant fall in the value of bank-notes, a rise in the price of all the articles of human consumption, augmented expenditure, and a continuance of the insane and costly expeditions, from which both the national honour and security had already so severely suffered. On the other hand, it was contended by the friends of the administration, that it never was the intention of government to make bank-notes a legal tender; that the measure adopted was not a permanent regulation, but a temporary expedient to enable the bank to gain time to meet the heavy demands which unexpected circumstances had brought upon it; that the Bank of England was perfectly able ultimately to make good all its engagements, and so the public had already become convinced, in the short interval which had elapsed since the Order in Council was issued; that it was indispensable, however, that Parliament should be satisfied of this solvency, and the necessity which existed for the measure which was adopted, and therefore that the matter should be referred to a secret committee, to report on the funds and engagements of the Bank of England, and the measures to be taken for its ultimate regulation.¹

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4.
Debates on
this subject
in Parlia-
ment.¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 294,
394.

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1797.

5.
Bill pro-
longing this
suspension.

This measure having been carried by Mr Pitt, a committee was appointed, which reported shortly after that the funds of the Bank were £17,597,000, while its debts were only £13,770,000, leaving a balance of £3,800,000 in favour of the establishment; but that it was necessary, for a limited time, to suspend cash payments. Upon this, a bill for the restriction of payments in specie was introduced, which provided that bank-notes should be received as a legal tender by the collectors of taxes, and have the effect of stopping the issuing of arrest on mesne process for payment of debt between man and man. The bill was limited in its operation to the 24th June; but it was afterwards renewed from time to time; and, in November 1797, it was ordered to continue till the conclusion of a general peace; and the obligation on the Bank to pay in specie was never again imposed till Sir Robert Peel's Act in 1819. The effects of this great measure were soon apparent. It administered enough, and not more than enough, of the restorative draught to the nation. Industry was thereafter secured in remunerating prices for its fruits; the life-blood circulated in sufficient quantity through the state. A currency was provided adequate to the increased warlike and pacific expenditure of the people, and which supplied the place of gold, when it was almost entirely draughted away during the commercial and military crises which followed. No difficulty was thenceforward experienced by the nation in the payment even of the enormous taxes imposed before the close of the war. The increased circulation provided for everything, while it was not issued with the senseless prodigality of revolutionary France, which ruined all private fortunes.^{1*}

Such was the commencement of the paper system in Great Britain, which ultimately produced such astonish-

* Bank of England notes in circulation :—

1796	.	.	£10,729,526	1799	.	.	£12,959,620
1797	.	.	11,114,120	1800	.	.	16,854,809
1798	.	.	13,095,830	1801	.	.	16,203,281

See Chap. xcv. Appendix.

¹ Ann. Reg.
192, 206.
Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 294,
394, and
1023.

ing effects ; which enabled the empire to carry on for so long a period so costly a war, and to maintain for years armaments greater than had been raised by the Roman people in the zenith of their power ; which brought the struggle at length to a triumphant issue, and arrayed all the forces of Eastern Europe, in British pay, against France, on the banks of the Rhine. To the same system must be ascribed ultimate effects as disastrous as the immediate were beneficial and glorious ; the continued and progressive rise of rents, the unceasing, and to many calamitous, fall in the value of money during the whole course of the war ; increased expenditure, the growth of sanguine ideas and extravagant habits in all classes of society : unbounded speculation, prodigious profits, and frequent disasters among the commercial rich : increased wages, general prosperity, and occasional depression among the labouring poor. But these effects, which ensued during the war, were as nothing compared to those which have since the peace resulted from the return to cash payments, and consequent contraction of the currency by the bill of 1819. Perhaps no single measure ever produced so calamitous an effect as that has done. It has added at least a third to the national debt, and augmented in a similar proportion all private burdens in the country ; while at the same time it has taken as much from the remuneration of labour and means of paying it enjoyed by the community. It has thus occasioned such a fall of prices as has destroyed the sinking fund, rendered great part of the indirect taxes unproductive, and compelled in the end a return to direct taxation in a time of general peace. Thence has arisen a vacillation of prices unparalleled in any age of the world, a creation of property in some, and destruction of it in others, which in its ultimate consequences, all but equalled the disasters of a revolution.

The way in which these extraordinary and in the end disastrous effects have resulted from this change, and the

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6.

Immense
consequen-
ces of this
change, both
during the
war and
after the
peace.

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7.
Double set
of causes
which affect
the value of
Govern-
ment paper.

subsequent return to cash payments, is as follows:—
When government paper is made, either directly or by implication, a legal tender in all the transactions of life, two different causes may conspire to affect prices, tending to the same effect, but in very different degrees. The first is the general fall in the value of money, and consequent rise in the price of every article of life, which results from any considerable issue of paper; and this effect takes place without any distrust in government, from the mere *increase in the circulating medium*, when compared with the commodities in the general market of the nation which it represents, or is destined in its transmission from hand to hand to purchase. This change of prices proceeds on the same principles, and arises from the same causes, as the fall in the money price of grain or cattle, from an excess in the supply of these articles in the market. The second is the far greater, and sometimes unbounded, depreciation which may arise from *distrust in the ultimate solvency of government*, or the means which the nation possesses of making good its engagements. To this fall no limits can be assigned, because government may not be deemed capable of discharging a hundredth part of its debts: whereas the variation of prices arising from the former, seldom exceeds a duplication of their wonted amount: an effect, however, which is perfectly sufficient, if continued for any considerable time, and followed by a return to the old metallic system, to make one half of the property of the kingdom change hands.

8.
True test as
to which is
in operation.

The true test of the former effect is to be found in a general rise in the prices of every commodity, but without any difference between the money value when paid in specie and when paid in paper; the mark of the latter is, not only a rise in prices, even when paid in gold or silver, but an extraordinary difference between prices when discharged in a paper and a metallic currency. Notwithstanding all that the spirit of party may have alleged, there does not appear ever to have been any traces of the

latter effect in this country ; or that at any period a higher price was exacted for *articles* when paid in bank-notes than in gold. There was doubtless a very great enhancement of the price of gold *compared with silver* ; inasmuch that a guinea, in 1810 and 1811, sold in England for twenty-seven shillings. But that was not because paper was depreciated as compared with the precious metals, but one of these metals—gold—on account of its portability, had become *enhanced* in value as compared with the other, from the great demand for it during the wars in Germany and the Peninsula. This species of depreciation, however, appeared in the highest degree in France, where, when the credit of government was almost extinct, a dinner which, when paid in gold, cost a louis,¹ could only be discharged in assignats for twenty-eight thousand francs. But the former consequences prevailed long, and with the most wide-spread effects, in this country. Every article of life was speedily doubled in price, and continued above twenty years at that high standard ; and, upon the recurrence to a metallic currency in 1819, and consequent reduction of prices to a corresponding extent, the distress and suffering among the industrious classes long exceeded anything ever before witnessed in our history, and produced effects which probably never can be recovered from, and which have implanted the seeds of death in the British empire. But the full elucidation of this all-important subject must be reserved for the concluding chapter of this work.

The Opposition deemed this a favourable opportunity to bring forward their favourite project of Parliamentary Reform ; as the disasters of the war, the suspension of cash payments by the bank, the mutiny of the fleet, which will be immediately noticed, and the failure of the attempt to negotiate with France, had filled all men's minds with consternation, and disposed many true patriots to doubt the possibility of continuing the present system. On the 26th May, Mr, afterwards Earl Grey, brought forward his promised motion for a change in the system of repre-

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¹ Lac. xiii.
40.9.
Parliamen-
tary Reform
brought for-
ward by Mr
Grey.

26th May.

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sentation, which is chiefly remarkable as containing the outlines of that vast scheme which convulsed the nation when he was at the head of affairs in 1831, and subsequently made so great a change on the British constitution. He proposed that the qualification for county electors should remain as it was, but that the numbers they returned should be increased from 92 to 113 ; that the franchise should be extended to copyholders, and leaseholders holding leases for a certain term ; and that the whole remainder of the members, 400 in number, should be returned by one description of persons alone, namely, householders. His plan was, that the elections should be taken over the whole kingdom at once, and a large portion of the smaller boroughs be disfranchised. By this scheme, he contended, the landowners, the merchants, and all the respectable classes of the community, would be adequately represented ; and those only excluded whom no man would wish to see retain their place in the legislature—namely, the nominees of great families, who obtained seats, not for the public good, but for their private advantage. Mr Erskine, who seconded the motion, further argued, in an eloquent speech, that, from the gradual and growing influence of the Crown, the House of Commons had become perverted from its original office, which was that of watching with jealous care over the other branches of the legislature, into the ready instrument of their abuses and encroachments ; that there was now a deep and wide-spread spirit of disaffection prevalent among the people, which rendered it absolutely indispensable that their just demands should be conceded in time ; that further resistance would drive them into republicanism and revolution ; that the head of the government itself had once declared, that no upright or useful administration could exist while the House was constituted as it then was ; that the voice of complaint could not be silenced by a sullen refusal to remedy the grievance, and though this road might be pursued for a

season, yet the end of these things was death. "Give, on the other hand," said he, "to the people the blessings of the constitution, and they will join with ardour in its defence; and the power of the disaffected will be permanently crippled, by severing from them all the rational and virtuous of the community."¹

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 646,
734.

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Pitt, that the real question was not whether some alteration in the system of representation might not be attended with advantage, but whether the degree of benefit was worth the chance of the mischief it might possibly, or would probably induce. That it was clearly not prudent to give an opening to principles which would never be satisfied with any concession, but would make every acquisition the means of demanding with greater effect still more extensive acquisitions; that the fortress of the constitution was now beleaguered on all sides, and to surrender the outworks would only render it soon impossible to maintain the defence of the body of the place; that he had himself at one period been a reformer, and he would have been so still, had men's minds been in a calm and settled state, and had he been secure that they would rest content with the redress of real grievances; but, since the commencement of the French Revolution, it was too plain that this would assuredly not be the case. That it was impossible to believe that the men who remained unmoved by the dismal spectacle which their principles had produced in a neighbouring state—who, on the contrary, rose and fell with the success or decline of Jacobinism in every country of Europe—were actuated by similar views with those who prosecuted the cause of reform as a practical advantage, and maintained it on constitutional views; and he could never give credit to the assertion, that the temper of moderate reformers would induce them to make common cause with the irreconcilable enemies of the constitution. That reform was only a disguise assumed to conceal the approaches of

10.
Arguments
against it by
Mr Pitt. It
is rejected
by Parlia-
ment.

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 646,
734. May
26. Ann.
Reg. 253,
261.

11.
Reflections
on this sub-
ject.

revolution ; and that rapine, conflagration, and murder were the necessary attendants on any innovation since the era of the French Revolution, which had entirely altered the grounds on which the question of reform was rested, and the class of men by whom it was espoused. That these objections applied to any alteration of the government in the present heated state of men's minds ; but, in addition to that, the specific plan now brought forward, was both highly exceptionable in theory, and unsupported by experience. On a division, Mr Grey's motion was lost by a majority of 258 against 93.¹

In deciding on the difficult question of Parliamentary Reform, which has so long divided, and still divides, so many able men in the country, one important consideration, to be always kept in mind, is the double effect which any change in the constitution of government must always produce, and the opposite consequences with which, according to the temper of the times, it is likely to be followed. In so far as it remedies any experienced grievance, or supplies a practical defect, or concedes powers to the people essential to the preservation of freedom, it necessarily does good ; in so far as it excites democratic ambition, confers inordinate power, and awakens or fosters passions inconsistent with public tranquillity, it necessarily does mischief, and may lead to the dissolution of society. The expedience of making any considerable change, therefore, depends on the proportions in which these opposite ingredients are mingled in the proposed measure, and on the temper of the people among whom it is to take place. If the real grievance is great, and the public disposition unruffled, save by its continuance, unalloyed good may be expected from its removal, and serious peril from a denial of change. If the evil is inconsiderable or imaginary, and the people in a state of excitement from other causes, or the contagion of successful revolutions in the adjoining states, concession to their demands will probably lead to nothing but increased confusion, and more extravagant expectations.

Examples exist illustrating both these results; the gradual relaxation of the fetters of feudal tyranny, and the emancipation of the boroughs, led to the glories of European civilisation; while the concessions of Charles I., extorted by the vehemence of the Long Parliament, brought that unhappy monarch to the block; the submission of Louis to all the demands of the States-General, did not avert, but rather hastened, his tragic fate: and the granting of emancipation to the fierce outcry of the Irish Catholics, instead of peace and tranquillity, brought only increased agitation and more vehement passions to the peopled shores of the Emerald Isle.

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Applying these principles to the question of Parliamentary Reform, as it was then agitated, there seems no doubt that the changes which were so loudly demanded could not have redressed any considerable real grievance, or removed any prolific source of discontent; because they could not have diminished in any great degree the public burdens without stopping the war; and experience has proved in every age, that the most democratic states, so far from being pacific, are the most ambitious of military renown. From a greater infusion of popular power into the legislature, nothing but fiercer contests and additional expenses could have been anticipated. The concession, if granted, therefore, would neither have been to impatience of suffering, nor to the necessities of freedom, but to the desire of power in circumstances where it was not called for; and such a concession is only throwing fuel on the flame. And the event has proved the truth of these principles. Reform was refused by the Commons in 1797, and, so far from being either enslaved or thrown into confusion, the nation became daily freer and more united, and soon entered on a splendid and unrivalled career of glory. It was conceded by the Commons, in a period of comparative tranquillity, in 1831, and a century will not develop the ultimate effects of the change, which, hitherto at least, has done anything rather than augmented the securities

12.
Difference
between
redress of
grievances
and conces-
sions to
clamour.

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of durable liberty, or removed the lasting causes of popular discontent. Still less was it called for in the former period as a safe-guard to real freedom, because, though it was constantly refused for four-and-thirty years afterwards, the power of the people steadily increased during that period, and at length effected a great democratic alteration in the constitution.

13.
Arguments
against con-
tinuing the
war.

The question of continuing the war again occupied a prominent place in the debates of Parliament. On the side of the Opposition, it was contended that, after four years of its maintenance, the addition of £200,000,000 to the national debt, and £9,000,000 annually to the taxes, the nation was farther than ever from achieving the objects for which the war had been undertaken; that Holland and Flanders had successively yielded to the arms of the Republic; which, like Antæus, had risen stronger from every fall; that all the predictions of failure in its resources had only been answered by increased conquests and more splendid victories; that the minister was not sincere in his desire for a negotiation, or he would have proposed very different terms from those actually offered, to which it was impossible to expect that a victorious enemy would accede; that the real object, it was evident, was only to gain time, to put France apparently in the wrong, and throw upon its government the blame of continuing hostilities, which had been unfortunately gained through the diplomatic skill evinced by the British ministers in the course of a negotiation begun with most hollow intentions.¹

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxii. 30th
Dec. 1796.
Ann. Reg.
1797, 152.

14.
Mr Pitt's
answer.

Mr Pitt lamented the sudden and unforeseen stop put to the negotiations, by which he had fondly hoped that a termination would be put to a contest into which we had been unwillingly dragged. This failure was a subject of regret and disappointment; but it was regret without despondency, and disappointment without despair. "We wish for peace," said he, "but on such terms as will secure its real blessings, and not serve as a cover merely to secret

preparations for renewed hostilities ; we may expect to see, as the result of the conduct we have pursued, England united and France divided ; we have offered peace on the condition of giving up all our conquests to obtain better terms for our allies ; but our offers have been rejected, our ambassador insulted, and not even the semblance of terms offered in return. In these circumstances, then, are we to persevere in the war with a spirit and energy worthy of the English name, or to prostrate ourselves at the feet of a haughty and supercilious Republic, to do what they require, and submit to all they shall impose ? I hope there is not a hand in his Majesty's councils which would sign the proposals, that there is not a heart in the House that would sanction the measure, nor an individual in the British dominions who would serve as courier on the occasion." ¹

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxii. 1796,
Dec. 30.
Ann. Reg.
1797, 153.

Parliament having determined, by a great majority in both Houses, to continue the contest with vigour, supplies were voted proportioned to the magnitude of the armaments which were required. The sums for the expenses of the war, in two successive budgets, amounted, exclusive of the interest of the debt, to £42,800,000. In this immense aggregate were included two loans, one of £18,000,000 and another of £16,000,000, besides an Imperial subsidy of £2,500,000, guaranteed by the British government. To defray the interest of these loans, new taxes to the amount of £2,400,000 were imposed. The land forces voted for the year were 195,000 men, of whom 61,000 were in the British islands, and the remainder in the colonial dependencies of the empire. The ships in commission were 124 of the line, 18 of fifty guns, 180 frigates, and 184 sloops. This great force, however, being scattered over the whole globe, could hardly be assembled in considerable strength at any particular point ; and hence, notwithstanding the magnitude of the British navy upon the whole, they were generally inferior to their enemies in every engagement. ²

15.
Supplies
voted for
the year.² Ann. Reg.
123, 132.
Chron. 3.

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16.
Naval pre-
parations of
France and
Spain.

On the other hand, the naval forces of France and her allies had now become very considerable. Then appeared in clear colours the great peril to British independence from the junction of the fleets of France and Spain, and the wisdom which had guided the cabinet of Anne, and sustained the efforts of Marlborough and Eugene, to avert so menacing a coalition of these formidable powers. Powerful as the British navy was, it was now decidedly overbalanced, in numbers at least, by the combined fleets of France, Spain, and Holland. The Treaty of Utrecht now brought forth its true fruits: the policy of Bolingbroke and Harley, a century before, now exposed England to imminent peril. No-wise discouraged by the unfortunate issue of the previous attempt against Ireland, the indefatigable Truguet was combining the means of bringing an overwhelming force into the Channel. Twenty-seven ships of the line were to proceed from the Spanish shores, raise the blockade of all the French harbours, and unite with the Dutch fleet from the Texel, in the Channel, where they expected to assemble sixty-five or seventy ships of the line—a force much greater than any which England could oppose to them in that quarter. To frustrate these designs, the British government had only eighteen ships of the line, under Lord Bridport, in the Channel, fifteen under Admiral Jarvis, off Corunna, and sixteen under Admiral Duncan, off the Texel; in all forty-nine: forces much inferior to those of the enemy, if they had been all joined together. This is sufficient to demonstrate by what a slender thread the naval supremacy of England was held, at the very time when the victories of France enabled her to combine against these islands all the maritime forces of Europe; and how vast is the debt of gratitude she owes to those heroic minds who compensated this inferiority in physical resources, by an energy and patriotism never surpassed in the annals of mankind.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
94, 95. Jom.
x. 195.

But great as this peril was, it was rendered incomparably more alarming, by a calamity of a kind and in a quarter

where it was least expected. This was the famous *Mutiny in the Fleet*, which, at the very time that the enemies of Britain were most formidable, and her finances most embarrassed, threatened to deprive her of her most trusty defenders, and brought the state to the very verge of destruction. Unknown to government, or at least without their having taken it into serious consideration, a feeling of discontent had for a very long period prevailed in the English navy. This was, no doubt, partly brought to maturity by the democratic and turbulent spirit which had spread from France through the adjoining states; but it had its origin in a variety of real grievances which existed, and must, if unredressed, have sooner or later brought on an explosion. The sailors complained with reason, that while all the articles of life had nearly doubled in price in the last century and a half, and risen with extraordinary rapidity since the present war commenced, their pay had not been augmented since the reign of Charles II.; that prize-money was unequally distributed, and an undue proportion given to the officers; that discipline was maintained with excessive and undue severity, and that the conduct of the officers towards the men was often harsh and revolting, and suited rather to the severity of feudal discipline, than the more liberal ideas of modern times. These evils, long felt and murmured against, were rendered more exasperating by the inflammatory acts of a number of persons of superior station, whom the general distress arising from commercial embarrassment had driven into the navy, and who persuaded the sailors, that, by acting unanimously and decidedly, they would speedily obtain redress of their grievances. The influence of these new entrants appeared in the secrecy and ability with which the measures of the malcontents were taken, and the general extension of the conspiracy, before its existence was known to the officers of the fleet.¹

The prevalence of these discontents was made known to Lord Howe and the Lords of the Admiralty, by a

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17.
Mutiny in
the fleet.
Its origin.

¹ Ann. Reg.
207, 208,
209. *Jom.*
x. 196, 202.

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18.

First breaks
out in the
Channel
fleet. Per-
fect order
preserved
by the
mutineers.
5th April.

variety of anonymous communications, during the whole spring of 1793. But they met with no attention; and, upon inquiry at the captains of vessels, they were so ill informed, that they all declared that no mutinous dispositions existed on board of their respective ships. Meanwhile, however, a vast conspiracy, unknown to them, was already organised, which was brought to maturity on the return of the Channel fleet to port in the beginning of April; and on the signal being made from the Queen Charlotte, by Lord Bridport, to weigh anchor on the 15th of that month at Spithead, instead of obeying, its crew gave three cheers, which were returned by every vessel in the fleet, and the red flag of mutiny was hoisted at every mast-head. In this perilous crisis, the officers of the squadron exerted themselves to the utmost to bring back their crews to a state of obedience; but all their efforts were in vain. Meanwhile, the fleet being completely in possession of the insurgents, they used their power firmly, but, to the honour of England be it said, with humanity and moderation. Order and discipline were universally observed; the most scrupulous attention was paid to the officers; those most obnoxious were sent ashore without molestation; delegates were appointed from all the ships to meet in Lord Howe's cabin, an oath to support the common cause was administered to every man in the fleet, and ropes were reeved to the yard-arm of every vessel as a signal of the punishment that would be inflicted on those that betrayed it. Three days afterwards, two petitions were forwarded, one to the Admiralty, and one to the House of Commons, drawn up in the most respectful and even touching terms, declaring their unshaken loyalty to their king and country, but detailing the grievances of which they complained; that their pay had not been augmented since the reign of Charles II., though every article of life had advanced above one-third in value; that the pensions of Chelsea were £13, while those of Greenwich still remained at £7;¹ that their

8th April.

¹ Ann. Reg.
209. Jom.
x. 209.

allowance of provisions was insufficient, and that the pay of wounded seamen was not continued till they were cured or discharged.

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This unexpected mutiny produced the utmost alarm both in the country and the government; and the Board of Admiralty was immediately transferred to Portsmouth to endeavour to appease it. Earl Spencer hastened to the spot, and, after some negotiation, the demands of the fleet were acceded to by the Admiralty, it being agreed that the pay of able-bodied seamen should be raised to a shilling a-day; that of petty officers and ordinary seamen in the same proportion, and the Greenwich pension augmented to ten pounds. This, however, the seamen refused to accept, unless it was ratified by royal proclamation and act of Parliament; the red flag, which had been struck, was rehoisted, and the fleet, after subordination had been in some degree restored, again broke out into open mutiny. Government, upon this, sent down Lord Howe to reassure the mutineers, and convince them of the good faith with which they were animated. The personal influence of this illustrious man, the many years he had commanded the Channel fleet, the recollection of his glorious victory at its head, all conspired to induce the sailors to listen to his representations; and, in consequence of his assurance that government would faithfully keep its promises, and grant an unlimited amnesty for the past, the whole fleet returned to its duty, and a few days afterwards put to sea, amounting to twenty-one ships of the line, to resume the blockade of Brest harbour.¹

19.
The demands of the fleet are granted by the government.

7th May.

¹ Ann. Reg.
211. Jom.
x. 203, 204.

The bloodless termination of this revolt, and the concession to the seamen of what all felt to be their just demands, diffused a general joy throughout the nation; but this satisfaction was of short duration. On the 22d May the fleet at the Nore, forming part of Lord Duncan's squadron, broke out into open mutiny, and on the 6th June they were joined by all the vessels of that fleet, from the blockading station off the Texel, excepting his

20.
Alarming mutiny at the Nore, and consternation in London.
22d May.
6th June.

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own line-of-battle ship and two frigates. These ships drew themselves up in order of battle across the Thames, stopped all vessels going up or down the river, appointed delegates and a provisional government for the fleet, and compelled the ships, whose crews were thought to be wavering, to take their station in the middle of the formidable array. At the head of the insurrection was a man of the name of Parker, a seaman on board the Sandwich, who assumed the title of "President of the Floating Republic," and was distinguished by undaunted resolution and no small share of ability. Their demands related chiefly to the unequal distribution of prize-money, which had been overlooked by the Channel mutineers; but they went so far in other respects, and were couched in such a menacing strain, as to be justly deemed totally inadmissible by government. At intelligence of this alarming insurrection, the utmost consternation seized all classes in the nation. Everything seemed to be falling at once. Their armies had been defeated, the bank had suspended payment, and now the fleet, the pride and glory of England, appeared on the point of deserting the national colours. The citizens of London dreaded a stoppage of the colliers, and all the usual supplies of the metropolis; the public creditors apprehended the speedy dissolution of government, and the cessation of their wonted payments from the treasury. Despair seized upon the boldest hearts; and such was the general panic, that the three per cents were sold as low as 45, after having been nearly 100 before the commencement of the war. Never, during the whole contest, had the consternation been so great, and never was Britain placed so near the verge of ruin.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
215, 217.
Jom. x. 205.

21.
Firmness of
the King and
government.

Fortunately for Great Britain, and the cause of freedom throughout the world, a Monarch was on the throne whose firmness no danger could shake, and a Minister at the helm whose capacity was equal to any emergency. Perceiving that the success of the mutineers in the

Channel fleet had augmented the audacity of the sailors, and given rise to the present formidable insurrection, and conscious that the chief real grievances had been redressed, government resolved to make a stand, and adopted the most energetic measures to face the danger. All the buoys at the mouth of the Thames were removed; Sheerness, which was menaced with a bombardment from the insurgent ships, was garrisoned with four thousand men; red-hot balls were kept in constant readiness; the fort of Tilbury was armed with a hundred pieces of heavy cannon; and a chain of gun-boats sunk to debar access to the harbour of London. These energetic measures restored the public confidence; the nation rallied round a Monarch and an administration who were not wanting to themselves in this extremity; and all the armed men, sailors, and merchants in London, voluntarily took an oath to stand by their country in this eventful crisis.¹

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The conduct of Parliament on this trying occasion was worthy of its glorious history. The revolt of the fleet was formally communicated to both Houses by the King on the 1st June, and immediately taken into consideration. The greater part of the Opposition, and especially Mr Fox, at first held back, and seemed rather disposed to turn the public danger into the means of overturning the administration; but Mr Sheridan came nobly forward, and threw the weight of his great name and thrilling eloquence into the balance in favour of his country. "Shall we yield," said he, "to mutinous sailors? Never; for in one moment we should extinguish three centuries of glory." Awakened by this splendid example to more worthy feelings, the Opposition at length joined the administration, and a bill for the suppression of the mutiny passed by a great majority through both Houses of Parliament. By this act, it was declared death for any person to hold communication with the sailors in mutiny after the revolt had been declared by proclama-

22.
Noble conduct of Parliament.
Bill against the mutineers passed.

¹ Ann. Reg. 216, 217.
Jom. x. 206.

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¹ Parl. Deb.
xxxiii. 802,
803, 816,
817. Ann.
Reg. 218,
219.

23.
The insur-
gents are
divided.
Patriotic
conduct of
the Channel
fleet, and
suppression
of the mu-
tiny.

tion; and all who should endeavour to seduce either soldiers or sailors from their duty were liable to the same punishment. This bill was opposed by Sir Francis Burdett, and a few of the most violent of the Opposition, upon the ground that conciliation and concession were the only course which could insure speedy submission. But Mr Pitt's reply — that the tender feelings of these brave but misguided men were the sole avenue which remained open to recall them to their duty, and that a separation from their wives, their children, and their country, would probably induce the return to duty which could alone obtain a revival of that intercourse of affection — was justly deemed conclusive, and the bill accordingly passed.¹

Meanwhile a negotiation was conducted by the Admiralty, who repaired on the first alarm to Sheerness, and received a deputation from the mutineers; but their demands were so unreasonable, and urged in so threatening a manner, that they had the appearance of having been brought forward to exclude all accommodation, and justify, by their refusal, the immediate recurrence to extreme measures. These parleys, however, gave government time to sow dissension among the insurgents, by representing the hopeless nature of the contest with the whole nation in which they were engaged, and the unreasonable nature of the demands on which they insisted. By degrees they became sensible that they had engaged in a desperate enterprise, and that the majority, even in their own profession, would not stand by them. The whole sailors on board the Channel fleet gave a splendid proof of genuine patriotism, by reprobating their proceedings, and earnestly imploring them to return to their duty. This remonstrance, coupled with the energetic conduct of both Parliament and government, and the general disapprobation of the nation, gradually checked the spirit of insubordination. On the 9th June, two ships of the line slipped their cables and abandoned the insur-

gents amidst a heavy fire from the whole line; on the 13th, three other line-of-battle ships and two frigates openly left them, and took refuge under the cannon of Sheerness; on the following day, several others followed their example; and at length, on the 15th, the whole remaining ships struck the red flag of mutiny, and the communication between the ocean and the metropolis was restored. Parker, the leader of the insurrection, was seized on board his own ship, and, after a solemn trial, condemned to death; a punishment which he underwent with great firmness, acknowledging the justice of his sentence, and hoping only that mercy would be extended to his associates. Several of the other leaders of the revolt were found guilty, and executed; but some escaped from on board the prison-ship, and got safe to Calais, and a large number, still under sentence of death, were pardoned, by royal proclamation, after the glorious victory of Camperdown.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
216, 217.
Jom. x. 207,
208.

The suppression of this dangerous revolt with so little bloodshed, and the extrication of the nation from the greatest peril in which it had been placed since the time of the Spanish Armada, is one of the most glorious events in the reign of George III., and in the administration of Pitt.* Disdaining to submit to the audacious demands of the mutineers, refusing to treat with them even when they held the capital blockaded, they remained resolute in presence of the "floating republic" at the mouth of the Thames, without withdrawing a single ship from the blockade of Brest, Cadiz, or the Texel. The conduct adopted towards the insurgents may be regarded as a

24.
Admirable
conduct of
Mr Pitt on
this occa-
sion.

* The magnanimous conduct of the British government on this occasion was fully appreciated on the Continent. "Let us figure to ourselves," says Prince Hardenberg, "Richard Parker, a common sailor, the leader of the revolt, taking at Sheerness the title of Admiral of the Fleet, and the fleet itself, consisting of eleven sail of the line and four frigates, assuming the title of the Floating Republic; and, nevertheless, recollect that the English, but recently recovered from a financial crisis, remained undaunted in presence of such a revolt, and did not withdraw one vessel from the blockade of Brest, Cadiz, or the Texel! It was the firmness of ancient Rome."—HARD. iv. 432.

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masterpiece of political wisdom; and the happiest example of that union of firmness and humanity, of justice and concession, which can alone bring a government safely through such a crisis. By at once conceding all the just demands of the Channel fleet, and proclaiming a general pardon for a revolt which had too much ground for its justification, they deprived the disaffected of all real grounds of complaint, and detached from their cause all the patriotic portion of the navy; while, by resolutely withstanding the audacious demands of the Nore mutineers, they checked the spirit of democracy which had arisen out of those very concessions themselves. For such is the singular combination of good and bad principles in human nature, and such the disposition of man to run riot, on the least opening being afforded, that not only do our virtues border upon vices, but even from acts of justice the most deplorable consequences frequently flow. Humanity borders on weakness; charity itself may lead to ruin. Unless a due display of firmness accompanies concessions, dictated by a spirit of humanity, they too often are imputed to fear, and increase the very turbulent spirit they were intended to remove.

25.
Glorious
firmness of
Admiral
Duncan.

Admiral Duncan's conduct at this critical juncture was above all praise. He was with his fleet blockading the Texel, when intelligence of the insurrection was received, and immediately four ships of the line deserted to the mutineers, leaving him with an inferior force in presence of the enemy. They were speedily followed by several others; and at length the admiral, in his own ship, with two frigates, was left alone on the station. In this extremity his firmness did not forsake him: he called his crew on deck, and addressed them in one of those speeches of touching and manly eloquence, which at once melt the human heart.* His crew were

* "My Lads,—I once more call you together, with a sorrowful heart, from what I have lately seen of the disaffection of the fleets: I call it disaffection, for they have no grievances. To be deserted by my fleet, in the face of the enemy, is a disgrace which, I believe, never before happened to a British

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dissolved in tears, and declared, in the most energetic manner, their unshaken loyalty, and resolution to abide by him in life or death. Encouraged by this heroic conduct, he declared his determination to maintain the blockade, and, undismayed by the defection of so large a part of his squadron, remained off the Texel with his little but faithful remnant. By stationing one of the ships in the offing, and frequently making signals, as if to the remainder of the fleet, he succeeded in deceiving the Dutch admiral, who imagined that the vessels in sight were only the inshore squadron, and kept his station until the remainder of his ships joined him after the suppression of the insurrection.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
214. Journ.
x. 211.

It was naturally imagined at the time that this formidable mutiny had been, in part at least, instigated by the arts of the French government. But though they were naturally highly elated at such an unexpected piece of good fortune, and anxious to turn it to the best advantage, and though the revolutionary spirit which was abroad was unquestionably one cause of the commotion, there is no reason to believe that it arose from the instigation of the Directory, or was at all connected with any treasonable or seditious projects. On the contrary, after the minutest investigation, it appeared that the grievances complained of were entirely of a domestic character, that the hearts of the sailors were throughout true to their admiral, nor could I have supposed it possible. My greatest comfort, under God, is, that I have been supported by the officers, seamen, and marines of this ship, for which, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, I request you to accept my sincere thanks. I flatter myself much good may result from your example, by bringing those deluded people to a sense of the duty which they owe not only to their king and country, but to themselves.

26.
The mutiny
was totally
unconnected
with France.

"The British navy has ever been the support of that liberty which has been handed down to us from our ancestors, and which, I trust, we shall maintain to the latest posterity; and that can only be done by unanimity and obedience. This ship's company, and others who have distinguished themselves by their loyalty and good order, deserve to be, and doubtless will be, the favourites of a grateful nation. They will also have from their inward feelings a comfort which will be lasting, and not like the fleeting and false confidence of those who have swerved from their duty.

"It has been often my pride to look with you into the Texel, and see a foe which dreaded coming out to meet us. My pride is now humbled indeed!—

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country, and that, at the very time when they were blockading the Thames in so menacing a manner, they would have fought the French fleet with the same spirit as was afterwards evinced in the glorious victory of Camperdown. And, how alarming soever in its commencement, the ultimate consequences of this insurrection, as of most other popular commotions which originate in real grievances, and are candidly but firmly met by government, were highly beneficial. The attention of the cabinet was forcibly turned to the sources of discontent in the navy, and from that to the corresponding grievances in the army; and the result was a series of changes which, in a very great degree, improved the condition of officers and men in both services. The pay of the common soldiers was raised to its present standard of a shilling a-day; and those admirable regulations were soon after adopted in regard to pensions, prize-money, and retired allowances, which have justly endeared the memories of the Duke of York and Lord Melville to the privates of both services.¹

¹ Ann. Reg. 219, 222; and State Papers, 242. Jom. x. 220.

27.
Mutiny in
the fleet at
Plymouth
and off Ca-
diz. Sept.
1797.

It was not in the Channel and North Sea fleets alone, however, that this dangerous mutiny had its ramifications. Disturbances of a less conspicuous, but not less serious kind, soon after appeared at Plymouth, where they were only suppressed by an extraordinary exertion of courage and energy on the part of Lord Keith.* The danger my feelings cannot easily be expressed. Our cup has overflowed, and made us wanton. The all-wise Providence has given us this check as a warning, and I hope we shall improve by it. In Him, then, let us trust, where our only security is to be found. I find there are many good men among us; for my own part I have had full confidence in all in this ship, and once more beg to express my approbation of your conduct.

"May God, who has thus far conducted you, continue to do so; and may the British navy, the glory and support of our country, be restored to its wonted splendour, and be not only the bulwark of Britain, but the terror of the world. But this can only be effected by a strict adherence to our duty and obedience; and let us pray that the Almighty God may keep us all in the right way of thinking.—God bless you all!"—*Ann. Reg.* 1797, 214.

* Lord Keith went on board the *Saturn*, and gave the crew his opinion of their conduct, telling them that, if they surrendered fourteen of their ring-leaders, he should be satisfied; but if they did not, he had a list of fifty. After an appearance of crowding on him, and a threat from him to run the first man

was still more imminent in the fleet off Cadiz, which, had an admiral less firm and energetic than Earl St Vincent been at its head, would in all probability have been attended with the most disastrous consequences. So wide-spread was the spirit of disaffection in that fleet, that even the glorious victory of St Vincent, to be immediately noticed, could not extinguish it. A dangerous member of the London Corresponding Society,—which had been checked, but not extinguished, by the trial of Hardy and Horne Tooke,—named Bott, had got on board, and spread far and wide the seditious spirit by which that Society was animated. It extended through nearly all the ships in the fleet. In the *Romulus* it first appeared; and the captain only succeeded in appeasing it for the time by a promise that the vessel should on a certain day proceed to England. St Vincent ratified it, but, the day before the ship sailed, he drafted every man out of her, and sent her home with another crew. But it was on the arrival of Sir Roger Curtis' squadron, which joined the fleet from the Channel in September 1797, that the mutiny became most alarming. It broke out with great violence on board the *Marlborough*, *Lion*, and *Centaur*, part of Sir Roger's squadron, which had with great difficulty been kept in a state of subordination during the voyage from Spithead. A court-martial was forthwith assembled on board the flag-ship, and one of the principal ringleaders having been sentenced to be hanged, St Vincent, according to his invariable practice, ordered him "to be executed by the crew of *the Marlborough alone*, no part of the boats' crews from other ships assisting on the occasion." The commander of the *Marlborough*, Captain Ellison, represented that the crew of his vessel would not obey the order, and requested the aid of other boats' crews as usual on such occasions; but St Vincent

through who stirred, fourteen men were delivered up to him and immediately put in irons. This firmness and resolution instantly restored subordination to the fleet.—PELLEW'S *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, i. 190; a very valuable and interesting life of a patriotic and intrepid statesman.

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¹ Pellew's
Life of Lord
Sidmouth,
i. 190. Tucker's
St Vincent, i.
304, 307.

28.
Execution
of a pri-
soner.

sternly replied,—“Captain Ellison, you are an old officer, have suffered severely in the service, and lost an arm in action; that man *shall be hanged* at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, *and by his own ship's company*, for not another hand from any other ship in the fleet shall touch the rope.” He took, however, the most effectual measures to support Captain Ellison in the discharge of this trying duty. All the launches in the fleet, armed with heavy carronades and provided with twelve rounds of ball cartridge, were ordered to be in attendance, manned by trusty crews and gunners, under the command of an iron veteran, Captain Campbell of the *Blenheim*. The orders of St Vincent to him were, “if any symptoms of mutiny appeared in the *Marlborough*, any attempt to open her ports, or any resistance to hanging the prisoner, he was to proceed close to the ship, fire into her, and continue to fire till all mutiny or resistance should cease; and, if it should become absolutely necessary, to sink the ship in the face of the fleet.”¹

At seven next morning, all the launches, thus armed, proceeded to the *Marlborough*, and took a position within pistol-shot of that vessel, athwart her bows: their guns were then loaded. At half-past seven, on a signal from the admiral's ship, all the hands on board the fleet were turned up to witness the punishment, and at a quarter before eight a powerfully armed boat quitted the flag-ship, bearing the prisoner to be executed by his own crew. It speedily neared the *Marlborough*; the man was taken up, placed on the cat-head, and the halter put about his neck. An awful silence of a few minutes ensued; every eye in the fleet was bent in intense anxiety on the prisoner: the crisis was come; discipline or mutiny in a few seconds would prevail. The watch-bells of the fleet at length struck eight; a gun at the same moment was discharged from the flag-ship, and instantly the man was hoisted in the air; he soon dropped again, however, for the men at the rope had unintentionally let it slip. The anxiety

throughout the fleet now became unbearable, for it was thought the crew had resisted the order. Presently, however, he was hauled up to one of the yard-arms with a run. Lord St Vincent, for the first time turning aside his eye, then said, "The law is satisfied; discipline has been preserved."¹

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¹ Tucker's
St Vincent,
i. 306, 308.

This was the crisis of the mutiny; its spirit was indeed far from being extinguished, and dangerous disturbances afterwards broke out on board particular vessels; but there was no disposition evinced again to contest the power of the law. What principally tended to keep alive this alarming spirit, was the frequent arrival of ships from England, several of which were in a state of open mutiny, and nearly all brought a spirit of disaffection with them. Frequent mutinies broke out during the winter, and the dreadful sentence of the law was again and again inflicted; but they were all suppressed, and subordination at length, though not till a considerable period had elapsed, was restored throughout the fleet, by the unflinching energy and iron determination of Earl St Vincent. The mutinous spirit was not now entirely confined to the redressing of domestic grievances, or evils complained of in the service. Excited by the agents of the Corresponding Society in England, it aimed at revolution, and tended to an alliance with the enemies of their country. The mutineers on board the Princess Royal pointed to Cadiz as their future country. It required all St Vincent's firmness and energy to extinguish the widespread spirit, but he was equal to the crisis. When the St George arrived from England with some rebels in irons, whom Captain Peard had with dauntless courage seized, a court-martial was immediately summoned, who pronounced sentence on Saturday on the principal mutineers, and it was carried into execution next morning, *though it was Sunday*—a deviation from established usage which made a great impression on the fleet, as evincing the unflinching determination of the commander-

29.
Continu-
ance and
final sup-
pression of
the mutiny.

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¹ Tucker,
i. 306, 312.

in-chief. At length the disaffection wore out, the rebels finding that their reasonable demands had been conceded by government, and that their traitorous designs were met with ceaseless vigilance, and chastised with unbending rigour.¹

30.
Battle of
Cape St
Vincent.
Feb. 14.

But, whatever may have been the internal dissensions of the British fleet, never did it appear more terrible and irresistible to its foreign enemies than during this eventful year. Early in February, the Spanish fleet, consisting of twenty-seven ships of the line and twelve frigates, put to sea, with the design of steering for Brest, raising the blockade of that harbour, forming a junction with the Dutch fleet, and clearing the Channel of the British squadron. This design—the same as that which Napoleon afterwards adopted in 1805—was defeated by one of the most memorable victories ever recorded even in the splendid annals of the English navy. Admiral Jarvis, (Earl St Vincent,) who was stationed off the coast of Portugal, had, by the greatest efforts, and a degree of vigour almost unparalleled even in the glorious annals of the British navy, at length succeeded in repairing the various most serious losses which his fleet had sustained during the storms of winter, and at this period lay in the Tagus with fifteen sail of the line, and six frigates. The moment he heard of the enemy's having sailed, he instantly put to sea, and was cruising off CAPE ST VINCENT, when he received intelligence of their approach, and immediately prepared for battle. He bore down on the starboard tack, the ships being in the most compact order, standing to the south before the wind; and, nothing daunted by the great superiority of force, nearly two to one, which they presented to his own squadron, succeeded in breaking the enemy's line between the eighteenth and nineteenth ships of the Spanish fleet, where there was a considerable opening.* Captain

* Lord St Vincent's expressions on this occasion as they neared the combined fleet, and the numbers of the enemy were announced, were highly characteristic. He was walking the quarterdeck when the successive ships were called

Troubridge, in the Culloden, led the van of the leading column, and, passing slowly through the line, poured two tremendous broadsides, double-shotted, into the enemy's three-deckers; the other ships followed, opening a dreadful fire on the right and left as they passed through. No sooner had he crossed the enemy's line, than Troubridge tacked again, and, followed by the *Blenheim*, *Prince George*, *Orion*, and *Irresistible*, engaged in close combat the weather division of the enemy, which had been separated from the rest of the fleet.* He thus succeeded in engaging the enemy, who were loosely scattered, and still straggling in disorderly array, in close combat, before they had time to form in regular order of battle. By a vigorous cannonade, these ships drove the nine Spanish vessels which had been cut off to leeward, so as to prevent their taking any part in the engagement which followed. The Spanish admiral upon this endeavoured to regain the lost part of his fleet, and was wearing round the rear of the British line, when Commodore NELSON, who was in the sternmost ship, perceiving his design, disregarded his orders, stood directly towards him, and precipitated himself into the very middle of the hostile squadron.¹ †

¹ Nelson's Narrative. Collingwood, i. 53. Brenton, i. 340. Tucker, i. 255. Vict. et Conq. viii. 253.

out—"There are eighteen sail of the line, Sir John."—"Very well, sir." "There are twenty sail of the line, Sir John."—"Very well, sir." "There are twenty-five sail of the line, Sir John."—"Very well, sir." "There are twenty-seven sail of the line, Sir John; near double our own."—"Enough, sir—no more of that, sir: the die is cast: if there were fifty sail of the line, I will go through them."—"That's right, Sir John!" cried Hallowell, his worthy flag-captain; "that's right! and a d——d good licking we shall give them." Such were the men, such the spirit, by which the British empire in those heroic days was saved.—See TUCKER'S *Life of St Vincent*, i. 255-6.

* So delighted was St Vincent with this movement, that on seeing it he said: "Look at Troubridge! He tacks his ship to battle as if the eyes of all England were upon him;—and would they were, for then they would see him as I know him to be, and, by heaven, sir! as the Dons will soon feel him."—TUCKER, i. 258.

† This gallant movement of Nelson's was in opposition to his orders, though imperatively called for by change of circumstances, and on this account it was, in all probability, that Nelson's name was not mentioned in St Vincent's official despatch. But he fully appreciated the importance of the movement. Captain Calder having in the evening hinted that the spontaneous movement of Nelson and Collingwood was unauthorised, St Vincent answered, "It certainly was so; and if ever you commit such a breach of your orders, I will forgive you also." After the engagement, St Vincent received Nelson on board his flag-ship in the most flattering manner.—TUCKER'S *Life of St Vincent*, i. 262.

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31.

First appearance
of Nelson
and Colling-
wood.

Bravely seconded by Captain COLLINGWOOD in the Excellent, Nelson wore and made all sail to aid the Culloden, now closely engaged. He ran his ship, the Captain, of 74 guns, between two Spanish three-deckers, the Santissima Trinidad, of 136 guns, commanded by Admiral Cordova, and the San Josef, of 112; and succeeded, by a tremendous fire to the right and left, in compelling the former to strike, although it escaped, in consequence of Nelson not being able, in the confusion of so close a fight, to take possession of his noble prize. The action, on the part of these gallant men, continued for nearly an hour with the utmost fury against fearful odds, which were more than compensated by the skill of the British sailors and the rapidity of their fire. Meanwhile the Principe de Asturias, bearing the Spanish vice-admiral's flag, made a gallant effort to break the British line, but was frustrated by Jarvis in the Victory throwing in stays; and, in her attempt, the Spanish vessel received a dreadful broadside from that ship. At the same time, Collingwood engaged the Salvador del Mundo of 112 guns. The action began when the two ships were not more than fifty yards apart, but such was the tremendous effect of the Englishman's broadsides, that in a quarter of an hour the Spanish three-decker struck her colours, and her firing ceased; upon which that noble officer, disdaining to take possession of beaten enemies, and seeing his old messmate, Nelson, ahead, hard pressed by greatly superior forces, passed on; and the Salvador, relieved from her antagonist, again hoisted her colours, and recommenced the action. But she was again compelled to strike, and finally taken possession of by one of the ships which followed. Collingwood immediately came alongside the San Isidoro, 74, so close, that a man might leap from the one to the other, the two vessels engaging thus at the muzzles of their guns. The combat was not of long duration; in ten minutes the Spaniard struck, and was taken possession of by the Lively frigate, to whom signal was made to secure the prize.¹

¹ Nelson's Narrative. Collingwood, i. 53. Collingwood's Mem. i. 47, 48. Brenton, i. 340, 341. Southey's Nelson, i. 170, 174.

Though Collingwood had thus, with 74 guns only, already forced two Spanish line-of-battle ships, one of which was a three-decker, to strike to him, yet he was not contented with his achievement, but pushed on yet farther to relieve Nelson, who was now engaged with the San Nicholas and San Josef on one side, and the huge four-decker, the Santissima Trinidad, on the other. So close did he approach the former of these vessels, that, to use his own words, you "could not put a bodkin between them," and the shot from the British passed through both the Spanish vessels, and actually struck Nelson's balls from the other side. After a short engagement, the Spaniard's fire ceased on that quarter; and Collingwood, seeing Nelson's ship effectually succoured, moved on, and engaged the Santissima Trinidad, which already had been assailed by several British ships in succession. No sooner was Nelson relieved by Collingwood's fire, than, resuming his wonted energy, he boarded the San Nicholas, of 74 guns, which had fallen on board the San Josef, of 112 guns, now entirely disabled by the Captain's fire. Berry, Nelson's first-lieutenant, was the first who got on board, by jumping into the enemy's mizen-chains; he was quickly followed by the soldiers of the 69th, who were on board, and Nelson himself was as quick as lightning on the enemy's deck. Resistance was soon overcome, they speedily hoisted the British colours on the poop; and, finding that the prize was severely galled by a fire from the decks of the San Josef, with which she was entangled, Nelson pushed on across it to its gigantic neighbour, himself leading the way, and exclaiming, "Westminster Abbey, or victory!" Nothing could resist such enthusiastic courage; the Spanish admiral speedily hauled down his colours, presenting his sword to Nelson on his own quarter-deck, while the British ship lay a perfect wreck beside its two noble prizes.¹

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32.
Glorious
successes
of Colling-
wood and
Nelson.

¹ Nelson's Narrative. Collingwood, i. 53. Collingwood's Mem. i. 48, 49. Southey's Nelson, i. 170. James, ii. 46, 51. Brenton's Life of St Vincent, ii. 309, 310. Vict. et Conq. viii. 253, 254.

While Nelson and Collingwood were thus precipitating themselves, with unexampled hardihood, into the centre

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33.

Combats in
the other
parts of the
fleet.

of the enemy's squadron on the larboard, the other column of the fleet, headed by Sir John Jarvis in the *Victory*, of 100 guns, was also engaged in the most gallant and successful manner; though, from being the van on the starboard tack, by which the enemy's line was pierced, they were the rear on the larboard, where Nelson had begun his furious attack. The *Victory*, passing under the stern of the *Salvador del Mundo*, followed by the *Barfleur*, Admiral Waldegrave, poured the most destructive broadsides into that huge three-decker, which surrendered and was secured, having previously been silenced by the *Orion*, Captain Saumarez. These ships, moving on, engaged in succession the *Santissima Trinidad*, whose tremendous fire from her four decks seemed to threaten destruction to every lesser opponent which approached her. At length, after having been most gallantly fought by Jarvis and Collingwood, she struck to Captain, now Lord de Saumarez, in the *Orion*; but, that intrepid officer, being intent on still greater achievements, did not heave-to, in order to take possession; but thinking it sufficient that she had hoisted the white flag on her quarter, and the British union-jack over it, passed on, leaving to the ship astern the easy task of taking possession. Unfortunately, in the smoke, this vessel did not perceive the token of surrender, but moved on ahead of the *Santissima Trinidad* after the admiral, so that the captured Spaniard was encouraged, though dismantled, to try to get off, and ultimately effected her escape. The remainder of the Spanish fleet now rapidly closed in, and deprived Captain Saumarez of his magnificent prize; but the British squadron kept possession of the *San Josef* and *Salvador*, each of 112 guns, and the *San Nicholas* and *San Isidoro* of 74 each. Towards evening, the detached part of the Spanish fleet rejoined the main body, and thereby formed a force still greatly superior to the British squadron;¹ yet such was the consternation produced by the losses they had experienced, and the imposing aspect of the British fleet, that they

1 Ann. Reg.
94, 95. App.
to Chron. 74.
Jom. x. 198.
Southey's
Nelson, i.
170, 176.
James, ii. 46,
63. De Sau-
marez's Life,
i. 171, 175.
Brenton, i.
341, 342, and
Life of St
Vincent, i.
310, 311.
Vict. et
Cong. viii.
253, 254.

made no attempt to regain their lost vessels, but, after a distant cannonade, retreated in the night towards Cadiz, whither they were immediately followed and blockaded by the victors.

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This important victory, which delivered England from all fears of invasion, by preventing the threatened junction of the hostile fleets, was achieved with the loss of only three hundred men, of whom nearly one-half were on board Nelson's ship, while above five hundred were lost on board the Spanish ships which struck alone—a signal proof how much less bloody sea-fights are than those between land forces, and a striking example of the great effects which sometimes follow an inconsiderable expenditure of human life on that element, compared to the trifling results which attend fields of carnage in military warfare. Admiral Jarvis followed the beaten fleet to Cadiz, whither they had retired in the deepest dejection, and with tarnished honour. The defeat of so great an armament by little more than half their number, and the evident superiority of skill and seamanship which it evinced in the British navy, filled all Europe with astonishment, and demonstrated on what doubtful grounds the Republicans rested their hopes of subduing these islands. The decisive nature of the victory was speedily evinced by the bombardment of Cadiz on three different occasions, under the direction of Commodore Nelson; and although these attacks were more insulting than hurtful to the Spanish ships, yet they evinced the magnitude of the disaster which they had sustained, and inflicted a grievous wound on the pride of the Castilians.^{1*}

34.
Great effect
produced by
this victory.

¹ Ann. Reg.
96. Jom.
x. 200.
James, ii. 63.

Horatio Nelson, who bore so glorious a part in these engagements, and who was destined to leave a name immortal in the rolls of fame, was born at Birnam-Thorpe,

* St Vincent was well aware of the vast importance of a victory to Britain at that critical moment. He said, when bearing down on the enemy when going into action—"Our captains have their ships in admirable order: I wish they were well up with the enemy: a victory is very essential to England at this moment."—TUCKER'S *Life of St Vincent*, i. 255.

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35.

Early his-
tory of Nel-
son.

in the county of Norfolk, on the 29th September 1758. His father was rector of that parish, of respectable, but not noble descent. The young Horatio early evinced so decided a partiality for a sea-life, that, though of a feeble constitution, he was sent on shipboard at the age of thirteen. Even before that first rude separation from the paternal roof, however, the character of the future hero had shown itself. When a mere child he strayed far from home, with a peasant boy of his acquaintance; and after being absent the whole day, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook, which he could not get over. "I wonder," said the lady who found him, "that hunger and fear did not drive you home." "Fear!" replied the future champion of England, "what is it? I never saw Fear." On another occasion, when his elder brother and he were returning to school, on horseback, they were obliged to return by a severe snow-storm. Mr Nelson, however, on their coming back, suspected there was some sham to avoid going to school, and sent them again on their journey. "If the road is dangerous, you may return," said he; "but recollect, I leave it to your honour." The snow was deep enough to have allowed them a reasonable excuse for returning home, but Horatio insisted on going on. "We must go on," said he; "remember, brother, it was left to our honour." There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which all the boys desired, but none of them ventured to take. Horatio volunteered upon the service, was lowered at night by sheets from the bed-room window, brought away the pears, and divided them among the boys, keeping no part to himself. "I only took them," said he, "because every other boy was afraid."¹

¹ Southey's
Nelson, i.
1, 7.

He first entered the navy as a midshipman, on board the *Raisonné*, of which his maternal uncle was captain; but that vessel was soon after paid off. Nelson's love of adventure made him volunteer on board the *Racehorse*,

which was sent by the Admiralty on a voyage of discovery to the North Pole. The marvels of the North Seas, the perilous adventures of the seaman's life, amidst their boundless fields of ice, strongly attracted the young seaman's imagination. One night, during the mid-watch, he dropped from the ship's side, and followed a huge bear for a great distance on the ice; his musket missed fire, but he was attacking him with the but-end, when Captain Ludlow, seeing his danger, fired a gun from the ship, which frightened the beast, and probably saved Nelson's life. Being severely reprimanded on his return for such rashness, "Sir," said he, "I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father." Subsequently he distinguished himself as a subaltern in various actions during the American war. Early in the revolutionary contest, he was employed in the siege of Bastia, in the island of Corsica, which he reduced—a singular coincidence, that the greatest leaders both at land and sea in that struggle should have first signalised themselves in operations on the same island. After the battle of St Vincent and the bombardment of Cadiz, he was sent on an expedition against the island of Teneriffe; but though the attack, conducted with his wonted courage and skill, was at first successful, and the town for a short time was in the hands of the assailants, they were ultimately repulsed, with the loss of seven hundred men and Nelson's right arm. His ardent spirit chafed in inaction, and he eagerly sought out every occasion in which danger was to be fronted, or glory won.¹

Gifted by nature with undaunted courage, indomitable resolution, and undecaying energy, Nelson was also possessed of the eagle glance, the quick determination, and coolness in danger, which constitute the rarest qualities of a consummate commander. Generous, open-hearted, and enthusiastic, the whole energies of his soul were concentrated in the love of his country; he loved danger itself, not the rewards of courage; he was in-

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36.

His first
entrance
into the
navy.¹ Southey's
Nelson, i. 9,
1784.

37.

His cha-
racter.

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cessantly consumed by that passion for great achievements, that sacred fire, which is the invariable characteristic of heroic minds. His soul was constantly striving after historic exploits; generosity and magnanimity in danger were so natural to him, that they arose unbidden on every occasion calculated to call them forth. On one occasion, during a violent storm off Minorca, Nelson's ship was disabled, and Captain Ball took his vessel in tow. Nelson thought, however, that Ball's ship would be lost if she kept her hold, and deeming his own case desperate, he seized the speaking-trumpet, and with passionate threats ordered Ball to let him loose. But Ball took his own trumpet, and in a solemn voice replied, "I feel confident I can bring you in safe: I therefore must not, and, by the help of Almighty God, I will not leave you." What he promised he performed, and on arriving in harbour, Nelson embraced him as his deliverer, and commenced a friendship which continued for life.¹

¹ Coleridge's
Friend.
Essay, 4th,
iii. 249.
Southey's
Nelson, i.
195. Ann.
Reg. 98.

88.
And fail-
ings.

His whole life was spent in the service of his country; his prejudices, and he had many, were all owing to the excess of patriotic feeling. He annihilated the French navy, by fearlessly following up the new system of tactics, plunging headlong into the enemy's fleet, and doubling upon a part of their line—the same system which Napoleon practised in battles on land. The history of the world has seldom characters so illustrious to exhibit, and few achievements so momentous to commemorate. But it is to his public conduct, and genius afloat, only, that this transcendent praise is due; in private life he appears in a less favourable light. Vain, undiscerning, impetuous, he was often regardless of his domestic duties; an ardent lover, he was a faithless and indifferent husband. Possessed of no knowledge of mankind in civil life, he was little qualified to resist the impulse of his vehement temperament amidst its seductions. There he was frequently subject to the delusion of art, and sometimes seduced by the passions of wickedness. Yet there was something

elevated even in his failings,—they were owing to the energetic temperament of his mind; they arose from passions nearly allied to virtue, and to which heroic characters in all ages have, in a peculiar manner, been subject. His patriotic spirit mastered the indignation which he frequently felt at his exploits not being rewarded in a more worthy spirit by his country: a forgetfulness for which no excuse can be found in our rulers, but which is too often the case when greatness is placed under the command of talent inferior to itself. In one unhappy instance, however, he was betrayed into more serious delinquencies. If a veil could be drawn over the transactions at Naples, history would dwell upon him in his public character as a spotless hero; but justice requires that cruelty should never be palliated, and the rival of Napoleon must be shielded from none of the obloquy consequent on the fascination of female wickedness.

Sir John Jarvis, afterwards created EARL ST VINCENT, one of the greatest and most renowned admirals that ever appeared in the British navy, possessed qualities which, if not so brilliant as those of his illustrious rival, were not less calculated for great and glorious achievements. He was born at Meaford, in Staffordshire, on the 21st January 1734. His father, who was Counsel and Solicitor to the Admiralty, was desirous to train him up to his own profession, to which young Jarvis was by no means disinclined; but he was dissuaded from it, by being told by his father's coachman, as he sat beside him on the box, that all lawyers were rogues. Having afterwards heard from a companion some stories of the adventures of a sailor's life, he resolved to go to sea; ran away from school, and concealed himself on board a ship at Woolwich for that purpose. His father was by no means affluent, and gave him £20 when he heard where he was, which was all the patrimony he ever received. The young sailor afterwards drew a bill for another £20, which came back unpaid; he immediately changed his

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1797.

39.
Biography
of Lord St
Vincent.

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1797.

¹ Brenton's
Life of St
Vincent,
i. 14, 20.

mode of living, quitted his mess, lived on the ship's allowance, washed and mended his own clothes, made three pair of trousers out of the ticking of his bed, and thus saved money enough to take up his bill. So early does decision of character and integrity of principle in the really great display itself in life.¹

40.
His first
services in
the navy.

He first entered the service on board the *Prince*: in the year 1759 he was lieutenant of the *Namur*, and was with that vessel at the siege and capture of Quebec in that year, in which service he greatly distinguished himself. An action which he soon after fought with the *Foudroyant* of eighty-four guns, was one of the most extraordinary displays of valour and skill even in that war, so fertile in great exploits. The mutiny which broke out with such violence in the Channel fleet and at the *Nore* in 1797, had also its ramifications in the fleet under his command, off the Spanish coast; and by the mingled firmness and clemency of his conduct, he succeeded in reducing the most disorderly vessels to obedience, with a singularly small effusion of human blood. He was resolution itself. Danger never deterred, difficulty never embarrassed him, where duty was to be performed. What he did himself, he enforced without scruple from others. A severe disciplinarian, strict in his own duties, rigorous in the exaction of them from others, he yet secured the affections both of his officers and men by the impartiality of his decisions, the energy of his conduct, and the perfect nautical skill which he was known to possess. It is doubtful if even Nelson would have been equal to the extraordinary exertion of vigour and capacity with which, in a period of time so short as to be deemed impossible by all but himself, he succeeded in fitting out his squadron from the Tagus in February 1797, in sufficient time to intercept and defeat the Spanish fleet. In the high official duties as First Lord of the Admiralty, with which he was intrusted in 1802, he exhibited a most praiseworthy zeal and anxiety for the detection of

abuses, and he succeeded in rooting out many lucrative corruptions which had fastened themselves upon that important branch of the public service; although he perhaps yielded with too much facility to that unhappy mania for reducing our establishments, which invariably seizes the English on the return of peace, and has so often exposed to the utmost danger the naval supremacy of Great Britain.¹

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¹ Brenton's
Life of St
Vincent, i.
200, 304.

But in nothing, perhaps, was his energy and disinterested character more clearly evinced than in his conduct in 1798, when he despatched Nelson to the Mediterranean at the head of the best ships in his own fleet, and furnished him with the means of striking a blow destined to eclipse even his own well-earned fame. But these two great men had no jealousy of each other; their whole emulation consisted in mutual efforts to serve their country, and they were ever willing to concede the highest mead of praise to each other. The mind of the historian, as it has been eloquently observed, "weary with recounting the deeds of human baseness, and mortified with contemplating the frailty of illustrious men, gathers a soothing refreshment from such scenes as these; where kindred genius, exciting only mutual admiration and honest rivalry, gives birth to no feeling of jealousy or envy, and the character which stamps real greatness is found in the genuine value of the mass, as well as in the outward splendour of the die; the highest talents sustained by the purest virtue; the capacity of the statesman, and the valour of the hero, outshone by the magnanimous heart which beats only to the measures of generosity and justice."²

41.
His noble
and disinter-
ested
spirit.

² Lord
Brougham's
Sketches of
Public Cha-
racters, 2d
Series.

Differing in many essential particulars from both of these illustrious men, EARL HOWE was one of the most distinguished characters which the English navy ever produced. He was born in 1725, the second son of Emanuel Howe, member of parliament for Nottingham, the eldest son of an old and distinguished family. Young

42.
Birth and
early life of
Earl Howe.

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1797.

Howe entered the navy at fourteen on board the *Severn*, which rounded Cape Horn with Commodore Anson, and shared in the distresses and sufferings of that memorable expedition. His character early displayed itself. Of him, perhaps, more truly than of any other of England's illustrious chiefs, may it be said, as of the Chevalier Bayard, that he was without fear and without reproach. He had the enterprise and gallant bearing so general in all officers in the naval service of Great Britain; but these qualities in him were combined with coolness, firmness, and systematic arrangement, with a habitual self-control and humanity to others, almost unrivalled in those intrusted with supreme command. In early life he contracted an intimate friendship with General Wolfe, and was employed with him in the expedition against the Isle d'Aix in Basque Roads in 1757. "Their friendship," says Walpole, "was like the union of cannon and gunpowder. Howe, strong in mind, solid in judgment, firm of purpose; Wolfe, quick in conception, prompt in execution, impetuous in action." His coolness in danger may be judged of from one anecdote. When in command of the Channel fleet, after a dark and boisterous night, when the ships were in considerable danger of running foul, Lord Gardiner, then third in command, a most intrepid officer, next day went on board the *Queen Charlotte*, and inquired of Howe, how he had slept, for that he himself had not been able to get any rest from anxiety of mind. Lord Howe replied that he had slept perfectly well; for as he had taken every possible precaution before it was dark, for the safety of the ship and crew, this consciousness set his mind perfectly at ease.¹

¹ Barrow's
Howe, chap.
xii. p. 420,
430.

43.
His gene-
rosity and
disinterest-
ed virtue.

In person he was tall and well proportioned, his countenance of a serious cast, and dark, but relaxing at times into a sweet smile, which bespoke the mildness and humanity of his disposition. No one ever conducted the stern duties of war with more consideration for the sufferings both of his own men and his adversaries, or mingled

its heroic courage with a larger share of benevolent feeling. Disinterested in the extreme, his private charities were unbounded; and in 1798, when government received voluntary gifts for the expenses of the war, he sent his whole annual income, amounting to eighteen hundred pounds, to the Bank, as his contribution. Such was his humanity and consideration for the seamen under his command, that it was more by the attachment which they bore to him, than by any exertion of authority, that he succeeded in suppressing, without effusion of blood, the formidable mutiny in the Channel fleet. He was the founder of the great school of English admirals, and, by his profound nautical skill and long attention to the subject, first succeeded in reducing to practice that admirable system of tactics to which the unexampled triumphs of the war were afterwards owing. A disinterested lover of his country, entirely exempt from ambition of every kind, he received the rewards with which his Sovereign loaded him with gratitude, but without desire: the only complaints he ever made of government were for the neglect of the inferior naval officers who had served in his naval exploits.¹

¹ Barrow's
Life of
Howe, chap.
xii. 482.

CUTHBERT COLLINGWOOD, afterwards Lord Collingwood, one of the brightest ornaments of the British navy, was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne on 26th September 1748. His father, though possessed only of a moderate fortune, was of an ancient and respectable family, which had suffered for its fidelity to the house of Stuart. In early youth he attended a school in Newcastle kept by the Reverend Hugh Moises, where, among his playfellows, were two boys of the name of Scott, one of whom afterwards became the greatest lawyer of England, Lord Chancellor Eldon, the other, Lord Stowell, the judge in Europe most deeply learned in general jurisprudence. From his earliest years young Collingwood was remarkable for the sweetness and gentleness of his disposition, a peculiarity which never afterwards forsook him; and

44.
Birth and
early history of Col-
lingwood.

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XXII.

1797.

¹ Colling-
wood's
Mem. i. 8,
11.45.
His incessant public
duties.

when first sent to sea, on board the Shannon, at the age of eleven, his heart was so melted by the separation from his family, that he sat crying in a corner of the vessel till a good-natured officer took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, to whom, with infantine simplicity, he offered a piece of cake his mother had given him. In 1774, he was engaged with a party of seamen in the battle of Bunkershill, and in 1776 he was sent to the West Indies, where Nelson was at the same time, and there commenced the friendship between these great men, which only terminated with the death of the latter.¹

In 1780 he was appointed to the command of the Pelican frigate, and in 1783 to the Sampson of 64 guns; and from that time till his death in 1810, he was almost continually at sea, and actively engaged in the service of his country. He bore a distinguished part in the glorious victory of the 1st June, when he commanded the Barfleur. Perhaps no officer ever went through so long and uninterrupted a course of public duty; for, of fifty years that he was in the navy, forty-four were spent in active service abroad; and from 1793 to his death, in 1810 he was only one year ashore. This incessant toil, and the difficult and responsible diplomatic duties with which it was connected in his later years, when in command of the Mediterranean fleet, at length broke down a constitution naturally strong, and wore out a spirit blessed with unusual serenity, so that he died in 1810, on shipboard, at the age of sixty-one, literally a martyr in the service of his country. On one occasion he was two-and-twenty months at sea without ever once entering a port or dropping an anchor. This lengthened and harassing service constituted a peculiar hardship as regards Collingwood; for never was a man more warmly attached to his family, or who sighed more ardently, amidst all his glory, for the blessed reward of domestic love.² But not a murmur ever escaped him at this lengthened and painful separation; and when once made aware that his country required, and

² Colling-
wood's
Mem. i. 8,
12.

could not dispense with his services, he prepared to waste away and expire on shipboard, with the same alacrity as he would have met death amidst the thunders of Trafalgar.*

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1797.

Collingwood was the most spotless hero of that age of glory. He had not the passion for fame which consumed Nelson, nor the ardent genius which gave his arm the force of the thunderbolt. His turn of mind was different; it was of a milder and holier character; it was more akin to the spirit of Heaven. A sense of duty, a devoted patriotism, a forgetfulness of self, directed all his actions. Naturally mild and benevolent, he seldom ordered a corporal punishment without shedding tears—never without enduring intense suffering; nevertheless, no officer in the fleet maintained stricter discipline, or had his crew in more thorough subjection. So well was this understood in the navy, that when Lord St Vincent was engaged with so much vigour in repressing the spirit of insubordination in the Mediterranean fleet, at the time of the mutiny at the Nore, he frequently drafted the most ungovernable spirits into the Excellent. "Send them to Collingwood," he used to say, "and he will bring them to order." On one occasion a seaman was sent from the *Romulus*, who had pointed one of the fore-castle guns, shotted to the muzzle, at the quarterdeck, and swore he would fire it, if the officers did not promise that he should receive no punishment. Collingwood, on his arrival, called him up before the ship's company, and said, "I know your character well: behave properly, and all shall be forgotten. But beware; if you attempt to excite insubordination in my ship, I will instantly put you up in a barrel and throw you into the sea." Under the treatment he received in the Excellent, the man soon became a good and obedient sailor.¹

46.

His character as a man.

¹ Coll. i. 65, 66.

* "I have laboured past my strength: I have told Lord Mulgrave so, that I may come and enjoy the comforts of my own blessed family again, and get out of the bustle of the world, and of affairs which are too weighty for me. God bless you! how rejoiced will my poor heart be when I see you all again!"—*Lord Collingwood to Lady Collingwood, Aug. 13, 1808, Memoirs, ii. 236.*

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47.
His character as an
admiral.¹ *Infra*,
c. xxxix.
§ 105.

No man more thoroughly understood the great art of tactics—that of precipitating himself at once into the enemy's line, and striking home wherever the blow fell: lion-hearted and undaunted, none led the way on such a service with more heroic resolution. Side by side with Nelson, he threw himself into the cluster of first-rate men of war, which at St Vincent were wearing round to support the cut-off part of their line; alone he plunged into the centre of the combined fleet at Trafalgar, and all but made the Spanish admiral in his huge three-decker strike before another British ship had come up to his assistance.¹ Nor were his abilities in civil administration inferior to his capacity in war. At once a cautious and skilful diplomatist, he conducted the complicated affairs of Great Britain in the Mediterranean for the few years preceding his death, and when in command of the fleet on that station, with such ability, that nearly its whole management came at length to be intrusted to him, and the incessant toil thence arising at length brought him to an untimely grave. Exemplary in all the duties of domestic life, a firm friend, a kind and faithful husband, an affectionate parent, he found time, when in command of the fleet off Toulon, and charged with all the diplomacy of the Mediterranean, to devote much of his thoughts to his domestic circle, the education of his daughters, even the relief of the poor in his neighbourhood. A sense of duty, a forgetfulness of self, a deep feeling of religious obligation, were the springs of all his actions. If required to specify the hero whose life most completely embodied the great principles for which England contended in the war, and the maintenance of which at length brought her victorious out of its dangers, the historian would without hesitation fix on Collingwood.*

ADAM DUNCAN, afterwards Viscount Duncan of Cam-

* For ample authority for these observations, the reader is referred to the Correspondence of Lord Collingwood, published by G. L. Collingwood, Esq., in two volumes, one of the most interesting and delightful books in the English language.

perdown, was born at Dundee on the 1st July 1731, of which town his father was afterwards Provost. He received the rudiments of his education in that town, and was already remarked in his early youth for the suavity of manner and evenness of temper, which he continued to display through the whole of life. He entered the navy in 1740, on board of the Shoreham frigate, and was present at the taking of the Havannah by Commodore Koppel in 1761, when he commanded the Valiant, 74, on board of which the Commodore had hoisted his broad pendant. On that occasion Duncan commanded the boats of the squadron, and distinguished himself particularly by the ability with which they were conducted. When the American war broke out, he was appointed to the command of the Monarch, 74, and evinced great skill in contending with the superior fleets of France and Spain, when they cleared the Channel in 1779.¹

An opportunity, however, soon occurred of combating the enemy on terms of equality, and again asserting the superiority of the British flag. In 1780 he was sent under Rodney to co-operate in the revictualling of Gibraltar, then blockaded by the French and Spanish fleets. Off Cape St Vincent they fell in with the Spanish fleet in a heavy gale, and immediately gave chase, in the course of which the British copper-bottomed vessels rapidly gained on the enemy. The Monarch had not that advantage, but, by Duncan's admirable management, he was one of the first in the fleet to get into action. He steered direct into the middle of the three sternmost of the enemy's vessels, and, when warned of the danger of doing so before the other British ships could get up to his support, he calmly replied, "I wish to be among them," and held straight on. He was soon among the Spanish fleet, and engaged the St Augustin on one side, yard-arm to yard-arm, and two other vessels, one of which bore eighty guns, on the other, and succeeded in compelling the former to strike, and forcing the two latter to sheer

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1797.

48.
Birth and
early years
of Lord
Duncan.¹ British
Naval Bio-
graphy, 433.
Biog. Univ.
sup. lxiii.
179.49.
His first
services at
sea.
16th Jan.
1780.

CHAP.
XXII.

1797.

¹ British
Naval Bio-
graphy, 435.
Biog. Univ.
lxiii. 179.

50.
His cha-
racter.

off.* Subsequently he bore a distinguished part in the brilliant series of manœuvres by which Lord Howe, in 1782, revictualled Gibraltar, at the head of thirty-four ships of the line, in the face of the combined fleet of forty-six. On the 1st February 1793 he was made vice-admiral; but his merits were so little regarded by the Admiralty, seldom prone to bring forward persons who have not the advantage of aristocratic birth, that for long he could not obtain employment, and he even had serious thoughts of quitting the service altogether. At length, in April 1795, in consequence of a connexion by marriage with Mr Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, he received the chief command in the North Seas, and with it the opportunity, in its most critical period, of proving the saviour of his country.¹

Duncan's character, both in professional daring and domestic suavity, closely resembled that of Collingwood. He had the same rapid eye and intrepid decision in action, the same boldness in danger, the same vigour in command, the same gentleness in disposition. Tall, majestic in figure, with an athletic form and noble countenance, he recalled the image of those heroes in whom the imagination of the poets has loved to embody the combination of vigour and courage with strength and beauty. The rapidity of his decision, the justice of his glance, was equal to that of Nelson himself: the breaking of the Dutch line at Camperdown, and interposition of the British fleet between the enemy and their own shore, was dictated by the same genius which led Nelson to pierce and assail in rear the French squadron at Aboukir. But the most glorious, because the most unexampled part of his career, was the manner in which, when deserted by all his fleet except one ship, he kept his station off the Helder, during the mutiny at the Nore, and by his personal influence and courage maintained, at that terrible crisis, his own crew in subjection, and with them the appearance of a blockade, with two ships of the line,

* The *St Augustin* afterwards escaped during the gale.

against fifteen. It is not going too far to say, that on his single conduct, on that occasion, the salvation of England depended; for if the Texel fleet had put to sea, and joined the Brest squadron during the mutiny at the Nore, where might now have been the British empire?

It was not without a violent struggle, and no small exertion, both of moral and physical courage, that the mutiny was suppressed, even in Duncan's own ship. Symptoms of insubordination had broken out on board her in Yarmouth roads, when the other ships were dropping off to the Nore; and at length the crew mounted the rigging, and gave three cheers, the well-known sign of mutiny. Duncan immediately ordered up the marines, who were perfectly steady, seized six of the mutineers, and called the whole ship's company on deck. "My lads," said he, "I am not apprehensive of any violence you may exercise towards myself; I would far rather rule you by love than by fear; but I will, with my own hands, put to death the first person who shall venture to dispute my authority. Do you, sir," turning to one of the mutineers, "want to take the management of the ship out of my hands?" "Yes, sir," replied the fellow. Duncan upon this, who had his sword drawn, raised it to plunge it in his breast; but the chaplain and secretary held his arm. The admiral upon this did not attempt to use the weapon, but, addressing the ship's company with emotion, said, "Let those who will stand by me and my officers go to the starboard side of the ship, that we may see who are our friends and who are our enemies." Overcome by the grandeur of his conduct, with one accord the whole crew ran over, except the six mutineers, who were left alone. They were immediately secured, and put in irons; and with this crew, recently so rebellious, did this noble admiral proceed, accompanied only by one ship of the line, the *Adamant*, to renew his station off the Texel. The mutineers soon evinced real repentance, and were let out by Duncan one by one; and never did a ship's company behave more nobly than the whole crew of

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1797.

51.
Undaunted
courage by
which he
suppressed
the mutiny
in his own
ship.

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the Venerable did, both in the blockade and at the battle of Camperdown. Such was Duncan's firmness ; by such men it was, at this vital crisis, that the British empire was saved. Never, in modern times, was more courage combined with more gentleness ; greater vigour with greater wisdom ; purer patriotism with loftier religion ; stronger professional genius with more elevated and devoted principle. If Great Britain, in her pacific and warlike administration, could reckon on a succession of such men as Collingwood and Duncan, she would indeed be immortal, for she would deserve immortality.¹

¹ Naval Biography, 437, 438.

52.
Early history of de Saumarez.

Less remarkable in general history than the illustrious heroes of whom a sketch has now been given, Sir JAMES DE SAUMAREZ was scarcely inferior to any of them in naval skill, amiable character, and heroic intrepidity. He was born in St Peter-Port, in Guernsey, on the 11th March 1757, so that he was already in middle life when the revolutionary war commenced. His father, who was a respectable physician, was descended of an ancient and eminent family, which had contributed more than one gallant ornament to the British navy. Young de Saumarez received the rudiments of his education at Elizabeth College, in Guernsey, where he early earned such a taste for poetry as showed he was qualified to have shone in the literary world, if his inclinations had led him in that direction. But from a very early period his predilection for the navy was decided : the fame of his gallant uncles, one of whom had taken a French 64 with a British frigate, and both circumnavigated the globe with Anson, had strongly impressed his imagination ; and accordingly, though his elder brother was already in the navy, his wishes were complied with, and, on the 20th September 1767, he entered on board the *Soleby*, Captain O'Bryen. His father on parting put a purse, containing fifteen guineas, into his hand, observing, that as he had a large family, he hoped he would use it with economy ; but that, when he wanted more, he might draw on his banker.² So

² Ross's Life of de Saumarez, i. l. 21. Naval Biography, 491.

conscientious, however, was Saumarez, in attending to the recommendation, that his father said, the sight of his drafts never after gave anything but pleasure.

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Saumarez was engaged, on board the *Bristol*, in several actions in the American war, particularly in the unsuccessful attack on Sullivan's Island, in which his coolness and intrepidity were so conspicuous that he was made a lieutenant; and, having afterwards obtained the command of the *Tisiphone* fireship, he distinguished himself under Kempenfeldt in an attack on the French squadron, conveying the West India fleet, on which occasion he captured, with his fireship, a frigate of 36 guns. This brilliant action procured for him the command of the *Russel*, 74,—an extraordinary instance of rapid promotion for a young man who was not yet twenty-five years of age. In command of that ship, he fought under Rodney in the glorious battle of the 12th April,—engaged for some time the huge *Ville de Paris*, and was only prevented, by a signal from the admiral to heave-to, from capturing, at the close of the day, a disabled French 74, of which he was in chase. On the breaking out of the revolutionary war he was appointed to the command of the *Crescent*, of 42 guns and 257 men, and soon made prize of *La Reunion*, of 36, and 320 men,—a success the more remarkable, that it was one of the first naval triumphs of the war, and was gained without the loss of a man, while the French had 120 killed and wounded. His nautical skill and coolness were soon after not less signally evinced by the manner in which, in company with two other small frigates, he eluded the pursuit, between Guernsey and the French coast, of an enemy's squadron, consisting of two line-of-battle ships and two frigates. Appointed afterwards to the *Orion*, 74, he took part, with his accustomed skill and gallantry, in the action between Lord Bridport's fleet and the Brest squadron, off l'Orient, on 23d June 1795; and with such unwearied vigilance did he conduct the blockade of Brest, that during the whole time he was in command of the

53.

His first
naval ser-
vices.
12th Dec.
1781.

20th Oct.
1793.

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XXII.

1797.

¹ Ross's Life
of de Sau-
marez, i. 28,
173. Naval
Biography,
495.

54.
His char-
acter.

inshore squadron, which lasted several years, not a single square-rigged French vessel of any description got in or out of that harbour. He was fortunate enough to join Admiral Jarvis (Lord St Vincent) in the *Orion*, 74, a few days before the glorious battle of St Vincent; we have seen that the gigantic *Santissima Trinidad* struck to his ship, bearing little more than half its number of guns, and that to his skill and daring the triumph of that day is in a considerable degree to be ascribed; and he will again appear with equal lustre amidst the thunder of Aboukir, and in the terrors of Algesiraz Bay.¹

He was one of the officers peculiar to that age, and in a great measure to the British nation, whose character embodied, like that of Collingwood and Duncan, the true spirit of the anti-revolutionary war. An exalted piety, an elevated patriotism, were the mainsprings of his life, and both appeared with the most signal lustre in its most trying emergencies. None of the captains at the Nile led their ship with more intrepidity into the hottest of the fire, and none did so under a more devout sense of the great cause of religion and virtue for which they were contending, or of the supreme superintendence of human affairs. He was the first after the battle was over to hoist, in conformity with Nelson's recommendation, the pendant at the mizen-peak, the well-known signal for the ship's company to assemble at prayers; and, however much disposed to ridicule such observances in their own country, or under other circumstances, the French prisoners were impressed with a passing feeling, at least, of respect and admiration, when they beheld a whole ship's company, so recently after such a conflict, when the decks were still encumbered with dead, and stained with blood, prostrate on their knees, to return thanks, with fervent devotion, to the Supreme Disposer of events, for the greatest naval victory recorded in history.² So just and humane had been his management of his ship's company, although the most exact discipline was observed, that, alone almost of

² Ross's Life
of de Sau-
marez, i.
224.

all the vessels in the fleet, no symptoms of insubordination appeared among them during the trying season which preceded and followed the mutiny at the Nore. Enthusiastic in his profession, zealous to the last degree in the public service, he never spared his own exertions, and often passed sleepless nights from watching and anxiety; but all his officers and men had their wonted periods of repose, which the admiral denied to himself alone. Yet even then, when his countenance bore the deep lines of anxiety, it was observed that all traces of care disappeared when letters arrived from his family, the scene of his fixed attachment and ceaseless interest. Exemplary in all the duties of domestic life, a firm friend, a generous master, devoted to his wife and children, the secret spring of all his actions was a deep and manly feeling of piety, which pervaded all his actions, and appeared with peculiar grace and fitness amidst the duties and dangers of a naval life.¹

¹ Ross's Life
of de Sau-
marez, ii.
327, 329.
Naval Bio-
graphy.

One combined naval and military operation of the same year requires a special notice, not so much from its intrinsic importance, as from the celebrity of the hero by whom it was conducted. On the 15th July a squadron, consisting of three seventy-fours, the *Leander* of 50 guns, two frigates, and a brig, was placed by Earl St Vincent under the orders of Admiral (now Sir Horatio) Nelson, to attack Teneriffe. They arrived off the island on the night of the 28th, and an attempt was immediately made to land a body of seamen and marines from the frigates, to take possession of the heights which commanded the fort of Vera Cruz, the principal defence of the island. The boats, however, could not land from the violence of the surf on the shore, till daylight, and then the heights were found to be so strongly occupied by the enemy, that it was hopeless to attempt to carry them with the men from the frigates only.² All hopes of a surprise were now at an end, and the Spaniards in the island were making the most vigorous preparations for resistance; but Nelson was not the man to abandon an

55.
Expedition
of Nelson to
Teneriffe.
24th July.

² James, ii.
56, 57. Vict.
et Cong.
viii. 260.
Southey's
Life of Nel-
son, i. 186,
187.

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XXII.

1797.

56.
Commence-
ment of the
attack.
July 24.

enterprise with which he was intrusted as long as a hope of success remained, and it was therefore resolved to attempt to carry the island by main force.

At eleven at night on the 24th, the boats of the fleet, containing about a thousand men, proceeded in six divisions towards the mole. The service was well understood to be a desperate one ; and though Nelson's orders were precise, not to land himself unless his presence was absolutely necessary, yet his ardent spirit could not keep aloof when danger was to be encountered, and he led the attack in person. The sailors pulled so silently that they were not discovered till half-past one in the morning, when just half a gun-shot from the mole-head, where they were to land. A loud cheer was then given, and the boats rowed as hard as they could towards the shore. But the Spaniards were well prepared. The alarm-bell answered the cheer, and forty pieces of cannon and a tremendous fire of musketry immediately opened, from the concentric batteries, on the flotilla. The bright light suddenly illuminating the gloom, showed the position of every boat, and enabled the enemy to direct the next discharges with unerring precision. Nevertheless Nelson and Freemantle, with five boats, reached the mole, landed instantly, stormed it, though defended by four hundred men, and spiked all the guns on the batteries. But this work had no protection from the citadel in rear, and the fire from it was so heavy, that nearly all the gallant assailants were struck down. Nelson himself, when in the act of stepping ashore, received a musket-shot through the right elbow and fell ; but as he fell he caught his sword, which he had just drawn, in his left hand, and held it firmly as he lay in the bottom of the boat almost fainting from loss of blood. At this instant the Fox cutter received a six-and-thirty pounder between wind and water, and went down with ninety-seven men on board. Eighty-three others were saved, mainly by the heroic efforts of Nelson himself, who, disabled as he was, exerted himself amidst the frightful scene to save the sufferers.¹ He could not, however, from

¹ Southey's
Nelson, i.
193, 194
James, ii. 58.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
261, 262.

loss of blood, remain longer in action, and was taken back to his own vessel, where his arm was amputated.*

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57.
Its failure.

Meanwhile Troubridge and Waller, with their division of the boats, had been more fortunate. Having missed the mole during the darkness of a tempestuous night, they yet reached the shore, and landed under a battery near the citadel. The tremendous surf, however, filled all the boats before landing, and soaked the whole powder, so that the muskets would not go off. Nevertheless this little band, only three hundred and forty, pushed on with their cutlasses, and reached the great square of the town, the appointed rendezvous for all the storming parties. There, however, they waited in vain for the co-operating columns from the side of the mole, and, after remaining two hours in suspense, tried to storm the citadel without ladders; but the increasing numbers of the enemy, who had now collected from all quarters, three thousand strong, precluded the possibility of even reaching its walls, still less of storming them, without powder to fire their muskets. Freemantle, therefore, was under the necessity of proposing a capitulation, in virtue of which the British were to be at liberty to re-embark with their arms and boats, if saved, and became bound not to attack any other of the Canary Islands. To these terms the Spanish governor acceded, and he had even the generosity to present all the British with a ration of biscuit and wine before they embarked, and intimated that all their wounded should be received into the town hospital.† The British lost two hundred and fifty men killed and wounded in this disastrous affair—a loss nearly as great as they sustained in the victory of St Vincent.¹

¹ James,
ii. 59, 60.
Southey's
Life of Nelson,
i. 195,
197. *Vict.*
et Conq. viii.
262, 263.

The glorious victory of St Vincent, in which they had

* Nelson merrily climbed up the ship's side, holding by his left arm, and said, "I know I must lose my arm, and the sooner it is off the better. Let me ~~store~~ store; I need no assistance; I have my legs yet."—SOUTHEY'S *Nelson*, i. 193.

† A Spanish youth, named Don Bernardo Collagon, stript himself of his shirt to make bandages for one of the British, against whom, not an hour before, he had been engaged in battle. There are the elements of a truly noble character in the Spaniards.—See SOUTHEY'S *Life of Nelson*, i. 197.

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XXII.1797.
58.Suppression
of the mu-
tiny in the
fleet off
Cadiz.

April 3.

borne so memorable a part, and the mingled firmness and judgment of Lord St Vincent, already noticed, in combating it, were far from extinguishing the seeds of mutiny which at this period were so widely spread through the British navy. At length, when three of the ships' companies, on their voyage from Spithead to Cadiz, had become extremely turbulent, by active measures three of the ringleaders were secured, and ordered to be executed on board the St George, where the mutiny had first shown itself. On their arrival, a plan was formed by the crew for seizing the vessel, deposing the officers, and liberating the criminals. Captain Peard of the St George, having received intelligence of this design, approached the mutineers, who were already assembled in the waist of the ship, and said, "I know your designs, and shall oppose them at the risk of my life. You have determined to oppose the authority of your officers; I am resolved to do my duty: I know most of you are deluded; but I know your ringleaders, and will bring them to justice. I command you to disperse." The whole crew stood firm. Upon this Peard, followed by his first lieutenant, John Hatley, rushed amidst the crowd, seized two of the leaders, dragged them out by main force, and put them in irons. Next morning the three original mutineers were hanged from the yard-arm of the St George, and two days after the two others thus seized. It was by such intrepidity that this terrible crisis in the fortunes of Britain was surmounted.¹

¹ James, ii.
60, 61.59.
Great pre-
parations of
the Dutch.

The great victory of St Vincent entirely disconcerted the well-conceived designs of Truguet for the naval campaign; but, later in the season, another effort, with an inferior fleet, but more experienced seamen, was made by the Dutch republic. For a very long period the naval preparations in Holland had been most extraordinary, and far surpassed anything attempted by the United Provinces for above a century past. The stoppage of the commerce of the republic had enabled the government, as it afterwards did that of the United States in America,

to man their vessels with a choice selection both of officers and men; and, from the well-known courage of the sailors, it was anticipated that the contest with the British fleet would be more obstinate and bloody than any which had yet occurred from the commencement of the war. De Winter, who commanded the armament, was a stanch republican, and a man of tried courage and experience. Nevertheless, being encumbered with land forces destined for the invasion of Ireland, he did not attempt to leave the Texel till the beginning of October, when, the British fleet having been driven to Yarmouth roads by stress of weather, the Dutch government gave orders for the troops to be disembarked, and the fleet to set sail, and make the best of its way to the harbour of Brest. Their object was to co-operate in the long-projected expedition against Ireland, now fermenting with discontent, and containing at least two hundred thousand men, organised, and ready for immediate rebellion.¹

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1797.

9th Oct.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. viii.
271, 274.
Wolfe Tone,
ii. 197, 201.

Admiral Duncan was no sooner apprised, by the signals of his cruisers, that the Dutch fleet was at sea, than he weighed anchor with all imaginable haste, and stretched across the German Ocean with so much expedition, that he got near the hostile squadron before it was out of sight of the shore of Holland. The Dutch fleet consisted of sixteen ships of the line and eleven frigates, the British of sixteen ships of the line and three frigates. Duncan's first care was to attain such a position as should prevent the enemy from returning to the Texel; and having done this, he bore down upon his opponents, and hove in sight of them, on the following morning, drawn up in order of battle at the distance of nine miles from the coast between CAMPERDOWN and Egmont. With the same instinctive genius which afterwards inspired Nelson with a similar resolution at Aboukir, he gave the signal to break the line, and get between the enemy and the shore—a movement which was immediately and skilfully executed in two lines of attack, and proved the principal

60.
Commence-
ment of the
battle of
Camper-
down.

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1797.

cause of the glorious success which followed, by preventing their withdrawing into the shallows, out of the reach of the British vessels, which, for the most part, drew more water than their antagonists. Admiral Onslow first broke the line, and commenced a close combat. As he approached the Dutch line, his captain observed, the enemy were lying so close that they could not penetrate. "The Monarch will make a passage," replied Onslow, and held on undaunted. The Dutch ship opposite gave way to let him pass, and he entered the close-set line. In passing through, he poured one broadside with tremendous effect into the bows of the *Haerlem*, and the other with not less into the stern of the *Jupiter*, bearing the Dutch vice-admiral, whom he immediately lay alongside, and engaged at three yards' distance. He was soon followed by Duncan himself, at the head of the second line, who pierced the centre, and laid himself beside de Winter's flag-ship. Shortly the action became general, each British ship engaging its adversary, but still between them and the lee-shore.¹

¹ Lord
Duncan's
Account.
16th Oct.
Ann. Reg.
100. Jom.
x. 213, 214.
Brenton, i.
347, 348.
James, ii. 69,
70. Vict. et
Conq. viii.
271, 275.

61.
Gallant re-
sistance of
De Winter.

De Winter, perceiving the design of the enemy, gave the signal for his fleet to unite in close order; but from the thickness of the smoke, his order was not generally perceived, and but partially obeyed. Notwithstanding the utmost efforts of valour on the part of the Dutch, the superiority of British skill and discipline soon appeared in the engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm, which followed. For three hours Admiral Duncan and de Winter fought within pistol-shot; but by degrees the Dutchman's fire slackened; his masts fell one by one overboard amidst the loud cheers of the British sailors; and at length he struck his flag, after half his crew were killed or wounded, and his ship was incapable of making any further resistance. De Winter was the only man on his quarter-deck who was not either killed or wounded; he lamented that, in the midst of the carnage which literally flooded the deck of his noble ship, he alone should have been spared.*

* De Winter and Admiral Duncan dined together in the latter's ship on the

Duncan's ship, however, was very seriously injured in this desperate conflict, and de Winter did not strike till, besides the Venerable, he was assailed by the Ardent and Bedford. Meanwhile Onslow, in the Monarch, leaving the Haerlem, Dutch 74, to the Powerful, continued close alongside the Jupiter; a vehement engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm, between these two equal antagonists, took place; and every ship in the British fleet was engaged in a furious combat with an antagonist in the enemy's line, but all between them and the Dutch shore. At this time the Hercules, Dutch 74, caught fire, and drifted close past the Venerable, Duncan's ship; and though the Dutch crew, in a surprisingly quick manner, extinguished the flames, yet as they had thrown their powder overboard to avoid explosion, they had no further means of resistance, and were obliged to strike their colours to the Triumph.¹

The Dutch vice-admiral in the Jupiter soon after struck to Admiral Onslow; and by four o'clock, seven ships of the line, two of fifty-six guns, and two frigates, were in the hands of the victors. No less skilful than brave, Admiral Duncan now gave the signal for the combat to cease, and the prizes to be secured, which was done with no little difficulty, as, during the battle, both fleets had drifted before a tempestuous wind to within five miles of the shore, and were now lying in nine fathoms water. It was owing to this circumstance alone that any of the Dutch squadron escaped; but when the British withdrew into deeper water, Admiral Story collected the scattered remains of the fleet, and sought refuge in the Texel, while Duncan returned with his prizes to Yarmouth roads. The battle was seen distinctly from the shore, where a vast multitude was assembled, who beheld in silent despair the ruin of the armament on which the national hopes had so long been rested. During the two days of

day of the battle, in the most friendly manner. In the evening, they played a rubber at whist, and de Winter was the loser; upon which he good-humouredly observed, it was rather hard to be beaten twice in one day by the same opponent.—BRENTON *ut supra*, and *personal knowledge*.

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¹ Duncan's
Official Ac-
count, 12th
Oct. Ann.
Reg. App.
to Chron.
374. Bren-
ton, i. 348,
349. James,
ii. 69, 70.
Vict. et
Conq. viii.
271.

62.
Glorious
victory
gained by
the British.

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tempestuous weather which ensued, one of the frigates was wrecked, the crew, however, being saved: another, driven on the Dutch coast, was recaptured; and the Delft, a fifty-six, went down, astern of the ship which had her in tow. But seven line-of-battle ships, and one of fifty-six guns, were brought into Yarmouth roads, amidst the cheers of innumerable spectators, and the transports of a whole nation. It was only as trophies, however, that their appearance was gratifying: such was their shattered condition, that they were not the slightest acquisition to the British navy.* The interest of the spectacle was much enhanced by the recollection that the men who had achieved this glorious triumph were the same who had so recently hoisted the red flag of mutiny, and by their humble demeanour, when surrounded by a nation's gratitude. When the Speaker of the House of Commons visited the wounded in their hammocks, they only said, "We hope, sir, we have now made atonement for our late offence."¹

¹ Brent. i.
348, 354-5.
James, ii. 71,
73. Ann.
Reg. 100,
101. Jom.
x. 213.
Toul. vi.
242, 243.
Pellew's
Life of Sid-
mouth, i.
194.

63.

Results of
this battle.

This action was one of the most important fought at sea during the revolutionary war, not only from the valour displayed on both sides during the engagement, but the important consequences with which it was attended. The Dutch fought with a courage worthy of the descendants of van Tromp and de Ruyter, as was evinced by the loss on either part, which in the British was one thousand and forty men, and in the Batavian, eleven hundred and sixty, besides the crews of the prizes, who

* The relative force of the two fleets stood thus:—

	British.	Dutch.
Ships,	16	16
Broadside guns,	575	517
Crews,	8,221	7,157
Tons of ships,	23,601	20,937

Thus, the superiority upon the whole was considerably in favour of the British, but not so much so as would at first sight appear, as three Dutch frigates, not named in the above list, took an active part in the fight, raking some of the British line-of-battle ships, to which the British had no similar force to oppose. Nevertheless, the Dutch fought most nobly; and it was the best fight that occurred during the war.—See JAMES, ii. 73, 74.

amounted to above six thousand. The appearance of the British ships, at the close of the action, was very different from what it usually is after naval engagements. No masts were down, little damage was done to the sails or rigging; like their worthy adversaries, the Dutch had fired at the hulls of their enemies, which accounts for the great loss in killed and wounded in this well-fought engagement. All the British ships had numerous holes in their hulls, and not a few balls sticking in them; but the rigging of many, of which the Monarch was one, was untouched. The Dutch were all either dismasted, or so riddled with shot, as to be altogether unserviceable. On either side marks of a desperate conflict were visible. But the contest was no longer equal; Britain had quadrupled her strength since the days of Charles II., while the United Provinces had declined both in vigour and resources. Britain was now as equal to a contest with the united navies of Europe, as she was then to a war with the fleets of an inconsiderable republic.¹

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¹ James, ii.
70, 71. Ann.
Reg. 101.

But the effects of this victory, both upon the security and the public spirit of Britain, were in the highest degree important. Achieved as it had been by the fleet which had recently struck such terror into every class by the mutiny at the Nore, and coming so soon after that formidable event, it both elevated the national spirit by the demonstration it afforded how true the patriotism of the seamen still was, and by the deliverance from the immediate peril of invasion which it effected. A subscription was immediately entered into for the widows and orphans of those who had fallen in this battle, and it soon amounted to £52,000. The northern courts, whose conduct had been dubious previous to this great event, were struck with terror; and all thoughts of reviving the principles of the Armed Neutrality were laid aside. But, great as were the external results, it was in its internal effects that the vast importance of this victory was chiefly made manifest. Despondency was no longer felt; the threatened invasion of Ireland was laid

64.
Great effects
of this vic-
tory.

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aside; Britain was secure. Britain now learned to regard without dismay the victories of the French at land, and, secure in her seagirt isle, to trust in those defenders—

“Whose march is o’er the mountain-wave,
Whose home is on the deep.”

The joy, accordingly, upon the intelligence of this victory, was heartfelt and unexampled, from the sovereign on the throne to the beggar in the hovel. Bonfires and illuminations were universal; the enthusiasm spread to every breast; the fire gained every heart; and amidst the roar of artillery, and the festive light of cities, faction disappeared, and discontents sank into neglect. Numbers date from the rejoicings consequent on this achievement their first acquaintance with the events of life, among whom may be reckoned the author, then residing under his paternal roof, in a remote parsonage of Shropshire, whose earliest recollection is of the sheep-roasting and rural festivities which took place on the joyful intelligence being received in that secluded district.

65.
Honours bestowed on
Admirals
Duncan and
Sir John
Jarvis.

The national gratitude was liberally bestowed on the leaders in these glorious achievements. Sir John Jarvis received the title of Earl St Vincent; Admiral Duncan that of Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, and Commodore Nelson that of Sir Horatio Nelson. From these victories may be dated the commencement of that concord among all classes, and that resolute British spirit, which never afterwards deserted this country. Her subsequent struggles were for conquest, these were for existence. From the deepest dejection, and an unexampled accumulation of disasters, she arose at once into security and renown; the democratic spirit gradually subsided, from the excitation of new passions, and the force of more ennobling recollections; and the rising generation, who began to mingle in public affairs, now sensibly influenced national thought, by the display of the patriotic spirit which had been nursed amidst the dangers and the glories of their younger years.

The remaining maritime operations of this year are hardly deserving of notice. A descent of fourteen hundred men, chiefly composed of deserters and banditti, in the bay of Pembroke, in February—intended to distract the attention of the British government from Ireland, the real point of attack—met with the result which might have been anticipated, by all the party being taken prisoners. Early in spring, an expedition, under General Abercromby, captured the island of Trinidad, with a garrison of seventeen hundred men, and a ship of the line in the harbour, three other line-of-battle ships being burned by the Spanish admiral, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands. Two months after, the same force failed in an attack on Porto Rico; notwithstanding which, however, the superiority of the British over the navy of their combined enemies was eminently conspicuous during the whole year, both in the Atlantic and Indian oceans; and, in particular, an expedition from the French part of St Domingo against the forts of Trois and St Marks, which had been wrested from them in that island, was defeated, after an obstinate struggle, with great loss.¹

It was just permitted to the illustrious statesman, to whose genius and foresight the development of the dauntless spirit which led to these glorious consequences is mainly, under Providence, to be ascribed, to witness its results. Mr Burke, whose health had been irretrievably broken by the death of his son, and who had long laboured under severe and increasing weakness, at length breathed his last at his country-seat of Beaconsfield, on the 9th July 1797. His counsels on British politics, during his last eventful moments, were of the same direct, lofty, and uncompromising spirit which had made his voice sound as the note of a trumpet to the heart of England. His last work, the Letters on a Regicide Peace, published a few months before his death, is distinguished by the same fervent eloquence, profound wis-

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1797.

66.

Abortive
descent in
Pembroke
Bay. Cap-
ture of
Trinidad.
13th Feb.¹ Ann. Reg.
89, 93, 94.
Jom. x. 218.

67.

Death of Mr
Burke.

9th July.

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¹ Regicide
Peace, *ad
fin.*68.
His charac-
ter as a
writer.

dom, and far-seeing sagacity, which characterised his earlier productions on the French Revolution. As his end approached, the vigour of his spirit, if possible, increased; and his prophetic eye anticipated, from the bed of death, those glorious triumphs which were destined to immortalise the close of the conflict. "Never," exclaimed he, in his last hours, "never succumb. It is a struggle for your existence as a nation. If you must die, die with the sword in your hand. But I have no fears whatever for the result. There is a salient living principle of energy in the public mind of England, which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe. Persevere, therefore, till this tyranny be overpast."¹

Thus departed this life, if not in the maturity of years, at least in the fulness of glory, Edmund Burke. The history of England, prodigal as it is of great men, has no such philosophic statesman to boast; the annals of Ireland, graced though they be with splendid characters, have no such shining name to exhibit. His was not the mere force of intellect, the ardour of imagination, the richness of genius; it was a combination of the three, unrivalled, perhaps, in any other age or country. Endowed by nature with a powerful understanding, an inventive fancy, a burning eloquence, he exhibited the rare combination of these great qualities with deep thought, patient investigation, boundless research. His speeches in parliament were not so impressive as those of Mirabeau in the National Assembly, only because they were more profound; he did not address himself with equal felicity to the prevailing feeling of the majority. He was ever in advance of the times, and left to posterity the difficult task of reaching, through pain and suffering, the elevation to which he had been at once borne on the wings of prophetic genius. Great, accordingly, and deserved, as was his reputation in the age in which he lived, it was not so great as it has since become; and strongly as subsequent

times have felt the truth of his principles, they are destined to rise into still more general celebrity with the experience of suffering from their abandonment, in the future ages of mankind. His eloquence in parliament, though often in the highest degree brilliant, and always founded on profound thought, was seldom effective. It was a common observation at the time, that his rising acted like the dinner-bell in thinning the House. In this there is nothing surprising; he was too far before his age. Eloquence, to be popular, must be in advance of the age, and *but a little* in advance.

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Burke, throughout life, was on terms of intimate friendship with Johnson; and no one more strongly felt the vast extent of his genius. His celebrated saying, "Sir, you cannot stand for five minutes under a shed with Mr Burke, during a shower of rain, without hearing something worth recollecting," shows in what estimation he was held by the great philosopher of the eighteenth century. Their minds were, in many respects, similar: in others, so different as to have scarcely any affinity to each other. Both had a deep sense of religion, a profound feeling of duty, high principles of honour, an ardent patriotism, extensive erudition. Both had vast stores of acquired learning, which restrained without oppressing in each the fire of an ardent and poetical imagination. Both knew mankind well in all ranks, had seen life in all its bearings, had great powers of conversation, and had observed and meditated much on human affairs. But in other respects, their characters were essentially different. Their opposite habits in life had not merely given them different turns of thought, but led them to exult in different modes of showing their powers. Composition was the great channel of Burke's greatness, as conversation was of Johnson's. Burke's writings are as much superior to Johnson's, as Johnson's sayings are to Burke's. The habit and necessity of public speaking had made the parliamentary orator burst through the trammels of an

69.
Parallel
between
Johnson and
Burke.

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artificial style, which, in writing, coerced the recluse author of the Rambler. Johnson's solitary independence and asperity of character enabled him to give a point to his sayings, which the practical statesman naturally shunned, or perhaps did not possess. No collection of Burke's sayings could have equalled what are to be met with in Boswell's Johnson; but Johnson could never have written the Reflections on the French Revolution, or the Letters on a Regicide Peace.

70.
His views
on the
French Re-
volution.

Like most men of a sound intellect, an ardent disposition, and an independent character, Mr Burke was strongly attached to the principles of freedom; and, during the American war, when those principles appeared to be endangered by the conduct of the British government, he stood forth as an uncompromising leader of the Opposition in parliament. He was from the outset, however, the friend of freedom only in conjunction with its indispensable allies, order and property; and the severing of the United States from the British empire, and the establishment of a pure republic beyond the Atlantic, appears to have given the first rude shock to his visions of the elevation and improvement of the species, and suggested the painful doubt, whether the cause of liberty might not, in the end, be more endangered by the extravagance of its supporters than by the efforts of its enemies. These doubts were confirmed by the first aspect of the French Revolution; and while many of the greatest men of his age were dazzled by the brightness of its morning light, he at once discerned amidst the deceitful blaze, the small black cloud which was to cover the world with darkness. With the characteristic ardour of his disposition, which often led him into vehemence and invective, he instantly espoused the opposite side; and in so doing he severed, without hesitation, the connexions and friendships of his whole life.¹ He experienced the most heart-rending anguish as long as the struggle lasted; but when it was over, he at once recovered—as great

¹ Pellet's
Sidmouth,
i. 85.

minds always do—his mental serenity, which he expressed by the fine quotation:—

*"Æneas celsâ in puppi, jam certus eundi,
Carpebat somnos."*

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He had the proud and solitary independence which so often characterises real genius. Relying on his own convictions, he was confident against the world in arms. Nor has this patriotic self-sacrifice, this heroic spirit, been without its reward. Posterity has already done justice to his principles. He is universally regarded as the first of modern political philosophers. In the prosecution of his efforts in defence of order, he was led to profounder principles of wisdom, regarding human affairs, than any intellect, save that of Bacon, had reached, and which are yet far in advance of the general understanding of mankind. His was not the instinctive horror at revolution which arises from the possession of power, the prejudices of birth, or the selfishness of wealth. On the contrary, he brought to the consideration of the great questions which then divided society, prepossessions only on the other side, a heart long warmed by the feelings of liberty, a disposition enthusiastic in its support, a lifetime spent in its service. He was led to combat the principles of Jacobinism from an early and clear perception of their consequences; from foreseeing that they would infallibly, if successful, destroy the elements of freedom; and, in the end, leave to society, bereft of all its bulwarks, only an old age of slavery and decline. It was not as the enemy, but the friend of liberty, that he was the determined opponent of the Revolution; and such will ever be the foundation in character on which the most resolute, because the most enlightened and the least selfish, resistance to democratic ascendancy will be founded.

71.
And character as a political philosopher.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1797—FALL OF VENICE.

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1797.

1.
Russia re-
cedes from
the contem-
plated mea-
sures of
Catherine.

THE year 1797 was far from realising the brilliant prospects which Mr Pitt had anticipated for the campaign, and which the recent alliance with the Empress Catherine had rendered so likely to be fulfilled. The death of that great princess, who, alone with the British statesman, appreciated the full extent of the danger, and the necessity of vigorous measures to counteract it, put an end to all the projected armaments. The Emperor Paul, who succeeded her, countermanded the great levy of a hundred and fifty thousand men which she had ordered for the French war; and, so far from evincing any disposition to mingle in the contentions of Southern Europe, seemed absorbed only in the domestic concerns of his vast empire. Prussia was still neutral; and it was ascertained that a considerable time must elapse before the veterans of the Archduke could be drawn from the Upper Rhine to defend the Alpine frontier of the Hereditary States. Everything, therefore, conspired to indicate, that, by an early and vigorous effort, a fatal blow might be struck at the heart of the Austrian power, before the resources of the monarchy could be collected to repel it.¹

¹ Th. ix. 49.
Jom. x. 12.

Aware of the necessity of commencing operations early in spring, Napoleon had in the beginning of the preceding winter urged the Directory to send him powerful reinforcements, and put forth the strength of the Republic

in a quarter where the barriers of the Imperial dominions were already in a great measure broken through. A very little consideration was required to show that this was the most vulnerable side on which the enemy could be assailed; but the jealousy of the Directory prevented them from placing the greater part of their forces at the disposal of so ambitious and enterprising a general as the Italian conqueror. Obstinately adhering to the plan of Carnot, which all the disasters of the preceding campaign had not taught them to distrust, they directed Hoche to send his forces to the army of the Sambre and Meuse, of which he received the command, while large reinforcements were also despatched to the army of the Rhine. Their plan was to open the campaign with two armies of eighty thousand men each in Germany, acting independent of each other, and on a parallel and far distant line of operations. The divisions of Bernadotte and Delmas, above twenty thousand strong, were sent from the Rhine to strengthen the Army of Italy. These brave men crossed the Alps in the depth of winter. In ascending Mont Cenis, a violent snow-storm arose, and the guides recommended a halt; but the officers ordered the drums to beat and the charge to sound, and they faced the tempest as they would have rushed upon the enemy. The arrival of these troops raised the army immediately under the command of Napoleon to sixty-one thousand, independent of sixteen thousand who were scattered from Ancona to Milan, and employed in overawing the Pope, and securing the rear and communications of the army. Four divisions, destined for immediate operations, were assembled in the Trevisane March in the end of February: viz. that of Massena at Bassano, of Serrurier at Castelbranco, of Augereau at Treviso, and of Bernadotte at Padua. Joubert, with his own division, reinforced by those of Delmas and Baraguay d'Hilliers, was stationed in the Tyrol, to make head against the formidable forces which the Imperialists were assembling in that warlike province.¹

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2.

Plans of the
Directory.
Bernadotte
and Delmas
join Napo-
leon.¹ Jom. x. 20,
21, 26. Th.
ix. 49, 51,
61.

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3.

Prepara-
tions of the
Imperia-
lists. Great
spirit in the
Hereditary
States.

Meanwhile the Austrian government had been actively employed, during the winter, in taking measures to repair the losses of the campaign, and make head against the redoubtable enemy who threatened them on the Carinthian frontiers. The great successes of the Archduke in Germany had filled them with the strongest hopes that the talents and influence of that youthful general would succeed in stemming the torrent of invasion from the Italian plains. As their veteran forces in Italy had almost all perished in the disastrous campaign of 1796, they resolved to bring thirty thousand men, under the Archduke in person, from the Upper Rhine, to oppose Napoleon, leaving only one corps there under Latour, and another under Werneck on the lower part of the river, to make head against the Republican armies. Fresh levies of men were made in Bohemia, Illyria, and Galicia; the contingents of the Tyrol were quadrupled; and the Hungarian nobility, imitating the noble example of their ancestors in the time of Maria Theresa, voted twenty thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry, besides immense stores of provisions and forage, for the ensuing campaign. These forces, speedily raised, were animated by that firm and persevering spirit which has always characterised the Austrian nation; the enthusiasm of the people, awakened by the near approach of danger, rose to the highest pitch; and the recruits, hastily moved forward, soon filled the shattered battalions on the banks of the Tagliamento. But new levies, however brave, do not at once form soldiers; the young recruits were no match for the veterans of Napoleon; and by an inexplicable tardiness, attended with the most disastrous effects, though too common at that period in the Austrian councils, the experienced soldiers from the army of the Rhine were not brought up till it was too late for them to have any influence on the issue of the campaign.¹

22d Nov.

¹ Jom. x. 9,
27, 28.

Anxious to strike a decisive blow before this great reinforcement arrived, Napoleon commenced operations on

the 10th March, when the Archduke had only assembled thirty thousand men on the Tagliamento, and when three weeks must yet elapse before the like number of veteran troops could even begin to arrive from the Rhine. Nothing demonstrates more clearly the vital importance of time in war: to this fatal delay all the disasters of the campaign were immediately owing. What could the Archduke do with half the forces opposed to him in arresting the progress of the conqueror of Italy? The summits of the Alps were still glittering with snow and ice, but this only inflamed the ambition of the youthful hero. In commencing operations thus early, however, the French general incurred a fearful risk. The armies of the Republic on the Rhine were not in a condition to take the field for a month afterwards, and Napoleon was about to precipitate himself into the midst of the Austrian monarchy without any other support than what he could derive from his own forces. He was emboldened to do so, solely by the inexplicable delay which the Aulic Council had incurred in bringing the reinforcements from Germany up to the menaced point. Aware of his inability to withstand an attack in front, in the defiles of Carinthia, the Archduke Charles had suggested the plan of taking post on the flank of the invader in the Tyrol, where he would soonest be joined by the reinforcements from Germany; but this the Aulic Council, fearful of leaving the great road to Vienna open, would not consent to. In this they committed a capital error. Had the Archduke, as he earnestly desired, been permitted to collect his army in the Tyrol, instead of Carinthia, there summoned to his standard the enthusiastic peasantry of that province, and fallen back, in case of need, on his reinforcements coming up from the Rhine, he would have covered Vienna just as effectually as on the direct road, accelerated by three weeks the junction with those forces, and probably totally changed the fate of the campaign.¹

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4.
Napoleon anticipates the arrival of the Austrian veterans. Dangers of his plan.

¹ Th. x. 63,
65. Jom. x.
27. Nap. iv.
68.

But it is hard to say whether the Aulic Council or the

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5.

Errors of
the Aus-
trian plan
of opera-
tions.

Directory did most to ruin the designs of their victorious generals: for the former obliged the Archduke to assemble his army on the Tagliamento, instead of the Adige; while the latter refused to ratify the treaty with the King of Sardinia, by which Napoleon had calculated on a subsidiary force of ten thousand men, to protect the rear and maintain the communications of his army. To compensate this loss, he had laboured all the winter to conclude an alliance with the Venetian republic; but its haughty, yet timid aristocracy, worn out with the French exactions, not only declined his overtures, but manifested some symptoms of alienation from the Republican interest, which obliged the French general to leave a considerable force in the neighbourhood of Verona, to overawe their vacillating councils. Thus Napoleon was left alone to hazard an irruption into the Austrian states, and scale the Noric and Julian Alps with sixty thousand men, leaving on his left the warlike province of the Tyrol, by which his communications with the Adige might be cut off; and on his right Croatia and the Venetian states, the first of which was warmly attached to the house of Austria, while the last might be expected, on the least reverse, to join the same standard.¹

¹Jom. x. 28.
Nap. iv. 69,
73. Th. ix.
63, 64.

6.

Description
of the thea-
tre of war.
Its moun-
tains, roads,
and rivers.

Three great roads lead from Verona across the Alps to Vienna—that of the Tyrol, that of Carinthia, and that of Carniola. The first, following the line of the Adige by Bolzano and Brixen, crosses the ridge of the Brenner into the valley of the Inn, from whence it passes by Salzburg into that of the Danube, and descends to Vienna after passing the Enns. The second traverses the Vicentine and Trevisane Marches, crosses the Piave and the Tagliamento, surmounts the Alps by the Col de Tarwis, descends into Carinthia, crosses the Drave at Villach, and, by Klagenfurth and the course of the Mour, mounts the Simmering, from whence it descends into the plain of Vienna. The third, by Carniola, passes the Isonzo at Gradisca, goes through Laibach, crosses the Save and the Drave,

enters Styria, passes Gratz, the capital of that province, and joins the immediately preceding road at Bruck. Five lateral roads lead from the chaussée of the Tyrol to that of Carinthia: the first, branching off from Brixen, joins the other at Villach; the second, from Salzburg, leads to Spital; the third, from Lintz, traverses a lofty ridge to Judenbourg; the fourth, from Enns, crosses to Leoben; the fifth, from St Pölten to Bruck. Three cross-roads unite the chaussée of Carinthia with that of Carniola; the first branches off from Görizia, and, following the course of the Isonzo, joins at Tarwis the route of Carinthia; the second connects Laibach and Klagenfurth; the third, setting out from Marburg, also terminates at Klagenfurth. The rivers which descend from the chain of mountains into the Adriatic Sea, did not present any formidable obstacles. The Piave and the Tagliamento were hardly defensible: and although the line of the Isonzo was far stronger, yet it was susceptible of being turned by the Col de Tarwis.¹

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¹ Personal
observa-
tion. Nap.
iv. 71, 72.
Jom. x. 29,
30. Th. ix.
64, 65.

By accumulating the mass of his forces on his own left, and penetrating through the higher ridges, Napoleon perceived that he would overcome all the obstacles which nature had opposed to his advance, and turn all the Austrian positions by the Alps which commanded them. He directed Massena, accordingly, to turn the right flank of the enemy with his powerful division, while the three others attacked them in front at the same time. Joubert, with seventeen thousand men, received orders to force the passes of the Italian Tyrol, and drive the enemy over the Brenner; and Victor, who was still on the Apennines, was destined to move forward with his division, which successive additions would raise to twenty thousand men, to the Adige, to keep in check the Venetian levies, and secure the communications of the army. Thirty-five thousand of the Austrian forces, under the Archduke in person, were assembled on the Tagliamento;² the remainder of his army, fifteen thousand strong, was in the Tyrol at Bolzano, while thirty thousand of the best troops he

7.
Napoleon
resolves to
turn the
Austrian
right.

² Jom. x. 33.
Nap. iv. 72,
73. Th. ix.
67.

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8.

Napoleon's
proclama-
tion to his
soldiers.

could ultimately rely on, were only beginning their march from the Upper Rhine.

Napoleon moved his headquarters to Bassano on the 9th March, and addressed the following order of the day to his army—"Soldiers! The fall of Mantua has terminated the war in Italy, which has given you eternal titles to the gratitude of your country. You have been victorious in fourteen pitched battles and seventy combats: you have made 100,000 prisoners, taken 500 pieces of field artillery, 2000 of heavy calibre, and four sets of pontoons. The contributions you have levied on the vanquished countries have clothed, fed, and paid the army, and you have, besides, sent 30,000,000 francs to the public treasury. You have enriched the Museum of Paris with 300 *chefs-d'œuvre* of art, the produce of thirty centuries. You have conquered the finest countries in Europe for the Republic; the Transpadane and Cispadane Republics owe to you their freedom. The French colours now fly, for the first time, on the shores of the Adriatic, in front, and within twenty-four hours' sail of the country of Alexander! The Kings of Sardinia, of Naples, the Pope, the Duke of Parma, have been detached from the coalition. You have chased the English from Leghorn, Genoa, Corsica; and now still higher destinies await you: you will show yourselves worthy of them! Of all the enemies who were leagued against the Republic, the Emperor alone maintains the contest; but he is blindly led by that perfidious cabinet, which, a stranger to the evils of war, smiles at the sufferings of the Continent. Peace can no longer be found but in the heart of the Hereditary States; in seeking it there, you will respect the religion, the manners, the property of a brave people; you will bring freedom to the valiant Hungarian nation."¹

¹Nap.iv.76.

The approaching contest between the Archduke Charles and Napoleon excited the utmost interest throughout Europe, both from the magnitude of the cause which they respectively bore upon their swords, and the great deeds

which, on different theatres, they had severally achieved. The one appeared resplendent from the conquest of Italy; the other illustrious from the deliverance of Germany; the age of both was the same; their courage equal, their respect for each other reciprocal. But their dispositions were extremely different, and the resources on which they had to rely in the contest which was approaching as various as the causes which they supported. The one was audacious and impetuous; the other calm and judicious: the first was at the head of troops hitherto unconquered; the last of soldiers dispirited by disaster: the former combated not with arms alone, but with the newly-roused passions; the latter with the weapons only of the ancient faith. The Republican army was the more numerous; the Imperial the more fully equipped: on the victory of Napoleon depended the maintenance of the Republican sway in Italy; on the success of the Archduke the existence of the empire of the Caesars in Germany. On the other hand, the people of the provinces, around and behind the theatre of war, were attached to the Austrians, and hostile to the French; retreat, therefore, was the policy of the former, impetuous advance of the latter: victory by the one was to be won by rapidity of attack; success could be hoped for by the other only by protracting the contest. Great reinforcements were hastening to the Archduke from the Rhine, the Hereditary States, and Hungary, while his adversary could expect no assistance in addition to what he at first brought into action. Success at first, therefore, seemed within the grasp of Napoleon; but if the contest could be protracted, it might be expected to desert the Republican for the Imperial banners.¹

On the 10th March all the columns of the army were in motion, though the weather was still rigorous, and snow to the depth of several feet encumbered the higher passes of the mountains. Massena's advanced guard came first into action; he set out from Bassano, crossed the Piave in the mountains, came up with the division of Lusignan,

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9.
Great interest excited in Europe by the approaching contest, and character of the opposite generals.¹ Bot. iii.
172, 173.

10.

Passage of the Tagliamento.

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16th March.

which he defeated, with the loss of five hundred prisoners, among whom was that general himself. By pressing forward through the higher Alps, he compelled the Archduke, to prevent his right flank being turned, to fall back from the Piave to the Tagliamento, and concentrate his army behind the latter river. On the 16th March, at nine o'clock in the morning, the three divisions of the French army, destined to act under Napoleon in person, were drawn up in front of the Austrian force, on the right bank of the Tagliamento. This stream, after descending from the mountains, separates into several branches, all of which are fordable, and covers the ground for a great extent between them with stones and gravel. The Imperial squadrons, numerous and magnificently appointed, were drawn up on the opposite shore, ready to fall on the French infantry the moment that they crossed the stream; and a vast array of guns already scattered their balls among its numerous branches. Napoleon, seeing the enemy so well prepared, had recourse to a stratagem. He ordered the troops to retire without the reach of the enemy's fire, establish a bivouac, and begin to cook their victuals. The Archduke, conceiving all chance of attack over for the day, withdrew his forces into their camp in the rear. When all was quiet, the signal was given by the French general: the soldiers ran to arms, and forming with inconceivable rapidity, advanced quickly in columns by echelon, flanking each other in the finest order, and precipitated themselves into the river. The precision, the beauty of the movements, resembled the exercise of a field-day; never did an army advance upon the enemy in a more majestic or imposing manner. The troops vied with each other in the regularity and firmness of their advance. "Soldiers of the Rhine!" exclaimed Bernadotte, "the army of Italy is watching your conduct." The rival divisions reached the stream at the same time, and fearlessly plunging into the water, soon gained the opposite shore. The Austrian cavalry, hastening to the spot, charged the

French infantry on the edge of the water, but it was too late; they were already established in battle-array on the left bank. Soon the firing became general along the whole line; but the Archduke, seeing the passage achieved, his flank turned, and being unwilling to engage in a decisive action before the arrival of his divisions from the Rhine, ordered a retreat; and the French light troops pursued him four miles from the field of battle. In this action the Imperialists lost six pieces of cannon and five hundred men; and, what was of more importance, the prestige of a first success. In truth, the Archduke never afterwards regained the confidence of his soldiers in contending with the conqueror of Italy.¹

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¹ Nap. iv. 76,
79. Th. ix.
67, 71. Jom.
x. 33.

Shortly after Massena, on the central road, effected his passage at St Daniel. Soon after, he made himself master of Ozoppo, the key of the chaussée of the Ponteba, which was not occupied in force, pushed on to the Venetian *chiusa*, a narrow gorge, rudely fortified, which he also carried, and drove the Austrian division of Ocksay before him to the ridge of Tarwis. The occupation of the Ponteba by Massena prevented the Archduke from continuing his retreat by the direct chaussée to Carinthia; he resolved, therefore, to regain it by the cross-road which follows the blue and glittering waters of the Isonzo, because the Carinthian road being the most direct, was the one which Napoleon would probably follow in his advance upon Vienna. For this purpose he despatched his parks of artillery, and the division of Bayalitch, by the Isonzo towards Tarwis, while the remainder of his forces retired by the Lower Isonzo. The day after the battle of the Tagliamento, Napoleon occupied Palma Nuova, where he found immense magazines, and soon after pushed on to Gradisca, situated on the Lower Isonzo, and garrisoned by three thousand men. Bernadotte's division arrived first before the place, and instantly plunging into the torrent, which at that time was uncommonly low, notwithstanding a shower of balls from two thousand Croats stationed on

11.
Operations
of Massena
on the left,
and passage
of the Isonzo
by Berna-
dotte.

17th March.

19th March.

1797.

Nap
pro-
tion
sold

22d March,
¹Nap. iv. 70,
 81, 83. Th.
 ix. 72, 73.
 Jom. x. 39,
 41.

12.
 Massena
 makes him-
 self master
 of the Col
 de Tarwis
 on the left.
 Desperate
 actions
 there. It is
 finally won
 by the Re-
 publicans.

the opposite shore, succeeded in forcing the passage, from whence he rashly advanced to assault the place. A terrible fire of grape and musketry, which swept off five hundred men, speedily repulsed this attack; but while the Imperialists were congratulating themselves upon their success, the division of Serrurier, which had crossed in another quarter, appeared on the heights in the rear, upon which they laid down their arms, to the number of two thousand, with ten pieces of artillery, and eight standards. This success had most important consequences; the division of Bernadotte marched upon and took possession of Laibach, while a thousand horse occupied Trieste, the greatest harbour of the Austrian monarchy; and Serrurier ascended the course of the Isonzo, by Caporetto and the Austrian *chiusa*, to regain at Tarwis the route of Carinthia.¹

Meanwhile Massena, pursuing the broken remains of Ocksay's division, made himself master of the important Col de Tarwis, the crest of the Alps, commanding the valleys descending both to Carinthia and Dalmatia. The Archduke immediately foresaw the danger which the division of Bayalitch would incur, pressed in rear by the victorious troops which followed it up the Isonzo, and blocked up in front by the division of Massena, at the upper end of the defile, on the ridge of Tarwis. He resolved, therefore, at all hazards, to retake that important station; and, for this purpose, hastened in person to Klagenfurth, on the northern side of the great chain of the Alps, and put himself at the head of a division of five thousand grenadiers, the first of the promised reinforcement, who had arrived at that place the day before from the Rhine, and with these veteran troops advanced to retake the passage. He was at first successful; and, after a sharp action, established himself on the summit with the grenadiers and the division of Ocksay. But Massena, who was well aware of the importance of this post, upon the possession of which the fate of the Aus-

trian division coming up the Isonzo and the issue of the campaign depended, made the most vigorous efforts to regain his ground. The troops on both sides fought with the utmost resolution, and both commanders exposed their persons like the meanest of the soldiers; the cannon thundered above the clouds; the cavalry charged on fields of ice; the infantry struggled through drifts of snow. At length the obstinate courage of Massena prevailed over the persevering resolution of his adversary; and the Archduke, after having exhausted his last reserves, was compelled to give way, and yield the possession of the blood-stained snows of Tarwis to the Republican soldiers.¹

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22d March.
¹ Nap. iv. 80.
81. Th. ix.
74, 75.

No sooner had the French general established himself on this important station, than he occupied in force both the defiles leading to Villach, whither the Archduke had retired, and those descending to the Austrian *chiusa*, where Bayalitch's division was expected soon to appear. Meanwhile that general, encumbered with artillery and ammunition waggons, was slowly ascending the vine-clad course of the Isonzo, and having at length passed the gates of the Austrian *chiusa*, he deemed himself secure, under the shelter of that almost impregnable barrier. But nothing could withstand the attack of the French. The fourth regiment, surnamed "the Impetuous," scaled, with infinite difficulty, the rocks which overhung the left of the position, while a column of infantry assailed it in front; and the Austrian detachment, finding itself thus turned, laid down its arms. No resource now remained to Bayalitch. Shut up in a narrow valley, between impassable mountains, he was pressed in rear by the victorious troops of Serrurier, and in front found his advance stopped by the vanguard of Massena on the slopes of the Tarwis.² A number of Croats escaped over the mountains by throwing away their arms; but the greater part of the division, consisting of the general himself, three thousand five hundred men, twenty-five pieces of cannon,

13.
Bayalitch's
division is
surrounded,
and com-
pelled to
surrender.² Nap. iv.
83, 84. Jom.
x. 46, 47.
Th. ix. 75.

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14.

Napoleon
crosses the
ridge of the
Alps. Occu-
pies Klagen-
furth.

and four hundred artillery or baggage-waggons, fell into the hands of the Republicans.

Napoleon had now gained the crest of the Alps; headquarters were successively transferred to Caporetto, Tarvis, Villach, and Klagenfurth: the army passed the Drave by the bridge of Villach, which the Imperialists had not time to burn; and, descending the course of the streams, found itself in the valleys which lead to the Danube. The Alps were passed; the scenery, the manners, the houses, the cultivation, all bore the character of Germany. The soldiers admired the good-humour and honesty of the peasants, the invariable characteristics of the Gothic race; detached cottages were spread through the valleys, the never-failing mark of general security and long-established wellbeing; the quantity of vegetables, of horses, and chariots, proved of the utmost service to the army. Klagenfurth, surrounded by a ruined rampart, was slightly defended; the French had no sooner made themselves masters of that town, than they restored the fortifications, and established magazines of stores and provisions; while the whole British merchandise found in Trieste, was, according to the usual custom of the Republicans, confiscated for their use.¹

¹Nap. iv. 84,
86.

15.
Successful
operations
of Joubert in
the Tyrol.
March 20.

While these important operations were going forward in Carinthia, Joubert had gained decisive successes in the Italian Tyrol. No sooner had the battle of the Tagliamento expelled the Imperialists from Italy, than that general received orders to avail himself of his numerical superiority, and drive the Austrians over the Brenner. He commenced the attack, accordingly, on the 20th March. The Imperialists were in two divisions, one under Kerpen, on the Lavis, in the valley of the Adige; the other under Laudon, in the mountains near Neumarkt. The former, encamped on the plateau of Cembra, on the river Lavis, was assailed by Joubert with superior forces, and after a short action, driven back to Bolzano, with the loss of two thousand five hundred prisoners and

seven pieces of cannon. The French, after this success, separated in two divisions: the first, under Baraguay d'Hilliers, pursued the broken remains of Kerpen's forces on the great road to Bolzano; while the second, composed of the *élite* of the troops under Joubert in person, advanced against Laudon, who had come up to Neumarkt, in the endeavour to re-establish his communication with Kerpen. The Imperialists, attacked by superior forces, were routed, with the loss of several pieces of cannon and a thousand prisoners; while, on the same day, the other division of the army entered Bolzano without opposition, and made itself master of all the magazines it contained.¹

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¹ Nap. iv. 89.
Jom. x. 51,
52.

Bolzano is situated at the junction of the valleys of the Adige and the Eisach. To command both, Joubert left Delmas, with five thousand men, in that town, and himself advanced in person with the remainder of his forces up the narrow and rocky defile which leads by the banks of the Eisach to Brixen. Kerpen awaited him in the position of Clausen—a romantic and seemingly impregnable pass, three miles above Bolzano, where the mountains approach each other so closely, as to leave only the bed of the stream and the breadth of the road between their frowning brows. An inaccessible precipice shuts in the pass on the southern side, while on the northern a succession of wooded and rocky peaks rise in wild variety from the raging torrent to the naked cliffs, three thousand feet above. Early in the morning, the French presented themselves at the jaws of this formidable defile; but the Austrian and Tyrolese marksmen, perched on the cliffs and in the woods, kept up so terrible a fire upon the road, that column after column, which advanced to the attack, was swept away. For the whole day the action continued, without the Republicans gaining any advantage;² but towards evening their active light infantry succeeded in scaling the rocky heights on the right of the Imperialists, and rolled down great blocks of stone, which

16.
Desperate
action at the
pass of Clausen, which is
at length
carried.

24th March.

² Jom. x.
53. Nap. iv.
89, 90.

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rendered the pass no longer tenable. Joubert, at the same time, charged rapidly in front, at the head of two regiments formed in close column; and the Austrians, unable to withstand this combined effort, fell back towards Brixen, which was soon after occupied by their indefatigable pursuers.

17.
Joubert advances to Sterzten. General alarm in the Tyrol. 28th March.

The invasion of the Tyrol, so far from daunting, tended only to animate the spirit of the peasantry in that warlike district. Kerpen, as he fell back, distributed numerous proclamations, which soon brought crowds of expert and dauntless marksmen to his standard; and, reinforced by these, he took post at Mittenwald, hoping to cover both the great road over Mount Brenner, and the lateral one which ascended the Pusterthal. But he was attacked with such vigour by General Belliard, at the head of the French infantry in close column, that he was unable to maintain his ground, and driven from the castellated heights of Sterzten to take post on the summit of the Brenner, the last barrier of Innspruck, still covered with the snows of winter. The alarm spread through the whole of the Tyrol; an attack on its capital was hourly expected; and it was thought the enemy intended to penetrate across the valley of the Inn, and join the invading force on the Rhine.¹

¹ Jom. x. 54,
55. Nap. iv.
89, 90. Th.
ix. 76.

18.
He marches across to join Napoleon at Klagenfurth. 4th April.

But Joubert, notwithstanding his successes, was now in a dangerous position. The accounts he received from Bolzano depicted in glowing colours the progress of the levy *en masse*; and although he was at the head of twelve thousand men, it was evidently highly dangerous either to remain where he was, in the midst of a warlike province in a state of insurrection, or advance unsupported over the higher Alps into the valley of the Inn. There was no alternative, therefore, but to retrace his steps down the Adige, or join Napoleon by the cross-road from Brixen, through the Pusterthal, to Klagenfurth. He preferred the latter; brought up Delmas with his division from Bolzano, and, setting out in the beginning of April,

joined the main army in Carinthia with all his forces and five thousand prisoners, leaving Servier to make head as he best could against the formidable force which Laudon was organising in the valley of the Upper Adige. Thus, in twenty days after the campaign opened, the army of the Archduke was driven over the Julian Alps; the French occupied Carniola, Carinthia, Trieste, Fiume, and the Italian Tyrol; and a formidable force of forty-five thousand men, flushed with victory, was on the northern declivity of the Alps, within sixty leagues of Vienna. On the other hand the Austrians, dispirited by disaster and weakened by defeat, had lost a fourth of their number in the different actions which had occurred, while the army of the Rhine was at so great a distance as to be unable to take any part in the defence of the capital.¹

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¹ Jom. x. 53.
Nap. iv. 90,
91.

But notwithstanding all this, the situation of the Republican armies, in many respects, was highly perilous. An insurrection was breaking out in the Venetian provinces, which it was easy to see would ultimately involve that power in hostilities with the French government; Laudon was advancing by rapid strides in the valley of the Adige, with no adequate force to check his operations; and the armies of the Rhine were so far from being in a condition to afford any effectual assistance, that they had not yet crossed that frontier river. The French troops could not descend unsupported into the valley of the Danube, for they had not cavalry sufficient to meet the numerous and powerful squadrons of the Imperialists; and what were forty-five thousand men in the heart of the Austrian empire? These considerations, which had long weighed with Napoleon, became doubly cogent, from a despatch received on the 31st March, at Klagenfurth, which announced that Moreau's troops could not enter upon the campaign for want of boats to cross the Rhine, and that the army of Italy must reckon upon no support from the other forces of the Republic. It was evident, notwithstanding the extreme pecuniary distress of the

19.
Perilous
condition,
notwith-
standing, of
Napoleon.

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¹ Nap. iv. 93,
94. Jom. x.
60, 61. Th.
ix. 92.

government, that there was something designed in this dilatory conduct, which endangered the bravest army and all the conquests of the Republic. The truth was, they had already conceived that jealousy of their victorious general, which subsequent events so fully justified, and apprehended less danger from a retreat before the Imperial forces, than from a junction of their greatest armies under such an aspiring leader.¹

20.
He, in consequence,
makes proposals of
peace to the
Archduke.

31st March.

Deprived of all prospect of that co-operation on which he had relied in crossing the Alps, Napoleon wisely determined to forego all thoughts of dictating peace under the walls of Vienna, and contented himself with making the most of his recent successes, by obtaining advantageous terms from the Austrian government. A few hours, accordingly, after receiving the despatch of the Directory, he addressed to the Archduke Charles one of those memorable letters, which, almost as much as his campaigns, exhibit his profound and impassioned mind:—"General-in-chief, — Brave soldiers make war, and desire peace. Has not this war already continued six years? Have we not slain enough of our fellow-creatures, and inflicted a sufficiency of woes on suffering humanity? It demands repose on all sides. Europe, which took up arms against the French Republic, has laid them aside. Your nation alone remains, and yet blood is about to flow in as great profusion as ever. This sixth campaign has commenced with sinister omens; but whatever may be its issue, we shall kill, on one side and the other, many thousand men, and, nevertheless, at last come to an accommodation, for everything has a termination, even the passions of hatred. The Directory has already evinced to the Imperial government its anxious wish to put an end to hostilities; the court of London alone broke off the negotiation. But you, general-in-chief, who, by your birth, approach so near the throne, and are above all the little passions which too often govern ministers and governments, are you resolved to deserve the title of benefactor of human-

ity, and of the real saviour of Germany? Do not imagine, general, from this, that I conceive that you are not in a situation to save it by force of arms; but even in such an event, Germany will not be the less ravaged. As for myself, if the overture which I have the honour to make shall be the means of saving a single life, I shall be more proud of the civic crown, which I shall be conscious of having deserved, than of the melancholy glory attending military success." The Archduke returned a polite and dignified answer, in these terms,—“In the duty which is assigned to me there is no power either to scrutinise the causes, or terminate the duration of the war; and, as I am not invested with any powers in that respect, you will easily conceive that I can enter into no negotiation without express authority from the Imperial government.” It is remarkable how much more Napoleon, a Republican general, here assumed the language and exercised the power of an independent sovereign, than his illustrious opponent; a signal proof how early he contemplated that supreme authority which his extraordinary abilities so well qualified him to attain, and which he so soon after reached. The Archduke was strongly impressed with the military talents displayed by Napoleon in this brief but eventful campaign; he might have said, as did Pompey to Sertorius, “I have learned more by defeat from you than by victory over others.”^{1 *}

To give weight to his negotiations, the French general pressed the Imperialists with all his might in their retreat. Early on the 1st April, Massena came up with the Austrian rearguard in advance of Freisach; they were instantly attacked, routed, and driven into the town pell-mell with

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2d April.

¹ Nap. iv.
96, 97.21.
And at the
same time
severely
presses the
retreating
Imperia-
lists.

* “J'apprends plus contre vous par mes désavantages,
J'aie emportés que les plus beaux succès qu'aillent
Ne m'ont encore appris par mes prospérités.
Je vois ce qu'il faut faire, à voir ce que vous faites :
Les sièges, les assauts, les savantes retraites,
Bien camper, bien choisir à chacun son emploi :
Votre exemple est partout une étude pour moi.”

CORNEILLE, *Sertorius*, Act. iii. scène I.

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the victors. Next day Napoleon, continuing his march, found himself in presence of the Archduke in person, who had collected the greater part of his army, reinforced by four divisions recently arrived from the Rhine, to defend the gorge of Neumarkt. This terrific defile, which even a traveller can hardly traverse without a feeling of awe, offered the strongest position to a retreating army; and its mouth, with all the villages in the vicinity, was occupied in force by the Austrian grenadiers. The French general collected his forces; Massena was directed to assemble all his divisions on the left of the chaussée; the division of Gueux was placed on the heights on the right, and that of Serrurier in reserve. At three in the afternoon the attack commenced at all points; the soldiers of the Rhine challenged the veterans of the Italian army to equal the swiftness of their advance; and the rival corps, eagerly watching each other's steps, precipitated themselves with irresistible force upon the enemy. The Austrians, after a short action, fell back in confusion; and the Archduke took advantage of the approach of night to retire to Hundsmarkt. In this affair the Imperialists lost fifteen hundred men, although the division of Massena was alone seriously engaged. Napoleon instantly pushed on to Schufing, a military post of great importance, as it was situated at the junction of the cross-road from the Tyrol and the great chaussée to Vienna, which was carried after a rude combat: and on the following day he despatched Guieux up the rugged defiles of the Mour in pursuit of the column of Sporck, which, after a sharp action with the French advanced-guard, succeeded in joining the main army of the Imperialists by the route of Rastadt. Two days after, Napoleon pushed on to Judenburg, where headquarters were established on the 6th April, and then halted to collect his scattered forces, while the advanced guard occupied the village of Leoben. The Archduke now resolved to leave the mountains, and concentrate all his divisions in the neighbourhood of

2d April.

¹ Personal observation.
Nap. iv. 84,
100. Jom.
x. 61, 65.
Th. ix. 96,
97.

Vienna, where the whole resources of the monarchy were to be collected, and the last battle fought for the independence of Germany.¹

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This rapid advance excited the utmost consternation at the Austrian capital. In vain the Aulic Council strove to stem the torrent; in vain the lower orders surrounded the public offices, and demanded with loud cries to be enrolled for the defence of the country; the government yielded to the alarm, terror in high places paralyzed every heart. The Danube was covered with boats conveying the archives and most precious articles beyond the reach of danger; the young archduke and archduchess were sent to Hungary, and with them was MARIA LOUISA, then hardly six years of age, who afterwards became Empress of France. The old fortifications of Vienna, which had withstood the arms of the Turks, but had since fallen into decay, were hastily put into repair, and the militia directed to the intrenched camp of Marienhalf, to learn the art which might so soon be required for the defence of the capital.¹

22.
Terror
excited by
these disas-
ters.

¹ Jom. x. 64.
Nap. iv. 92,
93.

The Emperor, although endowed with more than ordinary firmness of mind, at length yielded to the torrent. On the 7th April, the Archduke's chief of the staff, Bellegarde, along with General Meerfeld, presented himself at the outposts, and at LEOBEN a suspension of arms was agreed on for five days. All the mountainous region, as far as the Simmering, was to be occupied by the French troops, as well as Gratz, the capital of Styria. On the 9th, the advanced posts established themselves on that ridge, the last of the Alps, before they sink into the Austrian plain, from whence, in a clear day, the steeples of the capital can be discerned; and on the same day headquarters were established at Leoben in order to conduct the negotiation. At the same time General Joubert arrived in the valley of the Drave, and Kerpen, by a circuitous route, joined the Archduke.² The French army, which lately extended over the whole Alps, from Brixen to Trieste,

23.
Prelimina-
ries agreed
to at Leo-
ben.
7th April.

² Jom. x. 67.
Th. ix. 98.
Nap. iv. 102,
103.

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24.

Disastrous
state of the
French in
Croatia and
the Tyrol,
and extreme
danger of
Napoleon.
15th April.
19th April.

was concentrated in cantonments in a small space, ready to debouche, in case of need, into the plain of Vienna.

While these decisive events were occurring in the Alps of Carinthia, the prospects of the French in the Tyrol, Croatia, and Friuli, were rapidly changing for the worse. An insurrection had taken place among the Croats. Fiume was wrested from the Republicans, and nothing but the suspension of arms prevented Trieste from falling into the hands of the insurgents. Such was the panic they occasioned, that detached parties of the French fled as far as Görizia, on the Isonzo. Meanwhile Laudon, whose division was raised to twelve thousand by the insurrection in the Tyrol, descended the Adige, driving the inconsiderable division of Servier before him, who was soon compelled to take refuge within the walls of Verona. Thus, at the moment that the French centre, far advanced in the mountains, was about to be exposed to the whole weight of the Austrian monarchy, its two wings were exposed and an insurrection in progress, which threatened to cut off the remaining communications in its rear. The perilous situation of the French army cannot be better represented than in the words of Napoleon in his despatch to the Directory, enclosing the preliminaries of Leoben. "The court had evacuated Vienna; the Archduke and his army were falling back on that of the Rhine; the people of Hungary, and of all the Hereditary States, were rising in mass, and at this moment the heads of their columns are on our flanks. The Rhine is not yet passed by our soldiers; the moment it is, the Emperor will put himself at the head of his armies, and although, if they stood their ground, I would, without doubt, have beaten them, yet they could still have fallen back on the armies of the Rhine and overwhelmed me. In such a case retreat would have been difficult, and the loss of the army of Italy would have drawn after it that of the Republic. Impressed with these ideas, I had resolved to levy a con-

tribution in the suburbs of Vienna, and attempt nothing more. I have not four thousand cavalry, and, instead of the forty thousand infantry I was to have received, I have never got twenty. Had I insisted, in the commencement of the campaign, upon entering Turin, I would never have crossed the Po; had I agreed to the project of going to Rome, I would have lost the Milanese; had I persisted in advancing to Vienna, I would probably have ruined the Republic.”¹

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¹ Jom. x. 69,
462. Pièces
Just. Th.
ix. 114. Nap.
iv. 104.

When such were the views of the victorious and the dangers of the vanquished party, the negotiation could not be long in coming to a conclusion. Napoleon, though not furnished with any powers to that effect from the Directory, took upon himself to act in the conferences like an independent sovereign. The Austrians attached great importance to the etiquette of proceedings, and offered to recognise the French Republic if they were allowed the precedence; but Napoleon ordered that article to be withdrawn. “Efface that,” said he; “the Republic is like the sun, which shines with its own light; so much the worse for the blind, who cannot see it or profit by it.” “In truth,” he adds, “such a condition was worse than useless; because, if one day the French people should wish to create a monarchy, the Emperor might object that he had recognised a Republic. A striking proof how early the thoughts of the young general had been fixed upon the throne.”²

25.

Progress of
the negotia-
tion.² Th. ix. 100.
Nap. iv. 106.

As the French plenipotentiaries had not arrived, Napoleon, of his own authority, signed the treaty. Its principal articles were—1. The cession of Flanders to the Republic, and the extension of its frontier to the Rhine, on condition of a suitable indemnity being provided to the Emperor in some other quarter. 2. The cession of Savoy to the same power, and the extension of its territory to the summit of the Piedmontese Alps. 3. The establishment of the Cisalpine Republic, including Lombardy, with the states of Modena, Cremona, and the Bergamasque.

26.

Conditions
of the Pre-
liminaries,
agreed to
9th April
at Juden-
bourg.

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¹ Jom. x. 68,
69. Nap. iv.
106, 107.
Th. ix. 104,
105. Mar-
tens, vi. 385.

4. The Oglio was fixed on as the boundary of the Austrian possessions in Italy. 5. The Emperor was to receive, in return for so many sacrifices, *the whole continental states of Venice*, including Illyria, Istria, Friuli, and Upper Italy, as far as the Oglio. 6. Venice was to obtain, in return for the loss of its continental possessions, Romagna, Ferrara, and Bologna, which the French had wrested from the Pope. 7. The important fortresses of Mantua, Peschiera, Porto-Legnago, and Palma-Nuova, were to be restored to the Emperor, on the conclusion of a general peace, with the city and castles of Verona.¹

27.
Enormous
injustice of
this treaty
as far as
regards
Venice.

With truth does Napoleon confess, that these arrangements were made "in hatred of Venice."* Thus did that daring leader, and the Austrian government, take upon themselves, without any declaration of war, or any actual hostilities with the Venetian government, to partition out the territories of that neutral republic, for no other reason than because they lay conveniently for one of the contracting powers, and afforded a plausible pretext for an enormous acquisition of territory by the other. The page of history, stained as it is with acts of oppression and violence, has nothing more iniquitous to present. It is darker in atrocity than the partition of Poland, and has only excited less indignation in subsequent years, because it was not wound up with the interest of the democratic party, ever foremost in giving celebrity to any transaction, and was attended with no heroism or dignity in the vanquished. It reveals the melancholy truth, that small states have never so much reason to tremble for their independence, as when large ones in their neighbourhood are arranging the terms of peace; nor is it easy to say whether the injustice of the proceeding is most apparent on the first statement of the spoliation, or on a review of the previous transactions which are referred to in its defence.

VENICE, the Queen of the Adriatic, seated on her throne

* Napoleon, iv. 197.

of waters, had long sought to veil the weakened strength and diminished courage of age under a cautious and reserved neutrality. The oldest state in existence, having survived for nearly fourteen centuries, she had felt the weakness and timidity of declining years, before any serious reverse had been sustained in her fortunes, and was incapable of resisting the slightest attack, while as yet her external aspect exhibited no symptoms of decay. The traveller, as he sailed amid the palaces, which still rose in undecaying beauty from the waters of the Adriatic, no longer wondered at the astonishment with which the stern Crusaders of the north gazed at her marble piles, and felt a rapture like that of the Roman Emperor, when he approached where "Venice sat in state, throned on her hundred isles:" but in the weak and pusillanimous crowd which he beheld on all sides, he looked in vain for the descendants of those brave men who leaped from their galleys on the towers of Constantinople, and stood forth as the bulwark of Christendom against the Ottoman power; and still less, amidst the misery and dejection with which he was surrounded, could he go back in imagination to those days of liberty and valour—

—"when Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all Festivity;
The Revel of the Earth, the Mask of Italy."

In truth, Venice exhibits one of the most curious and instructive instances which is to be found in modern history, of the decline of a state without any rude external shock, from the mere force of internal corruption, and the long-continued direction of the passions to selfish objects. The league of Cambray, indeed, had shaken its power; the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope had dried up part of its resources, and the augmentation of the strength of the Transalpine monarchies had diminished its relative importance. Yet were its wealth and population such as to entitle it to a respectable rank among the European states; and, if directed by energy and courage,

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28.

State of
Venice at
this period.

29.
Its long-
continued
decline.

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they might have given it a preponderating weight on the issue of this campaign. But centuries of peace had dissolved the courage of the higher orders; ages of corruption had extinguished the patriotism of the people; and the continued pursuit of selfish gratification had rendered all classes incapable of the sacrifices which exertion for their country required. The arsenals were empty; the fortifications decayed; the fleet, which once ruled the Adriatic, was rotting in the Lagunæ; and the army, which formerly faced the banded strength of Europe in the league of Cambray, was drawn entirely from the semi-barbarous provinces on the Turkish frontier. With such a population, nothing grand or generous could be attempted; but it was hardly to be expected that the country of Dandolo and Carmagnola should have yielded without a struggle, and the eldest born of the European commonwealths have sunk unpitied into the grave of nations.¹

¹ Jom. x.
115.

30.
Description
of Venice as
a military
station.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, however, the very peculiar situation of Venice gave it extraordinary facilities for maintaining a defence, and, in fact, rendered it, with the maritime aid of England, altogether impregnable. It is situated upon a cluster of islands, surrounded by the Lagunæ, a series of shallow salt-water lakes, in general not more than three or four feet deep, and separated from the Adriatic by a great sand-bank called the Lido, all the entrances to which were strongly fortified. The most considerable of these, Malmocco and Chiusa, the scene of such desperate contests between the Genoese and Venetians in the sixteenth century, are guarded by strong fortresses, which could only be reduced by a power having the command of the sea. On the land side, Venice is unassailable, unless by a power which, by long-continued efforts, has succeeded in raising up a body of boatmen capable of contending with the celebrated gondoliers of the Adriatic Queen for the mastery of the green waves of the Lagunæ. But this is a very difficult matter, for

long practice has given these boatmen extraordinary skill in the management of their narrow vessels; and the intricacies of the navigation by which the capital is to be reached from the mainland, abounding with shoals and sand-banks, which can be avoided only by devious and circuitous channels, render the approach almost impossible to all but those intimately acquainted with the navigation. The distance of the capital from the nearest point of the shore being above five miles, renders any attempt at bombardment utterly hopeless.¹

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¹ Personal
observation.

When the impatient traveller emerges from the green mounds of the fortifications of Mestri or Fusina, the nearest harbours of the Continent, on which he embarks for the Venetian capital, and first finds himself on the broad wave of the Lagunæ, he perceives its domes and steeples rising, like specks above the water, at the extremity of the horizon, from the bosom of the waves. As he approaches nearer, winding through the channels of the Lagunæ clogged with green seaweed, the lower buildings of the capital gradually become visible; islands stretching out on either side, surmounted by domes, churches, and lofty buildings, give variety to the uniform surface of the water, and numerous pleasure-boats, seen in all directions, indicate the approach to the metropolis. The canals by which the city is at first entered, are bordered by mean brick edifices, which but ill correspond with its imposing aspect when seen from a distance. But this unfavourable impression is soon removed when the traveller reaches the Great Canal, which winds in a serpentine form through the heart of the city, lined on either side by stately palaces of marble, adorned with the richest façades, in the Palladian style. Independent of the historical associations with which it is connected, Venice is, from the peculiarity of its situation, and the exquisite beauty of its architectural decorations, the most interesting city in Europe. The Place of St Mark,

31.
And as an
object of
taste.

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adorned by the genius of Palladio and San-Suvino, with its eastern end filled by the barbaric magnificence of the Church of St Mark, presents the most beautiful square that is anywhere to be met with; while the adjoining harbour, the broad expanse of which is reached through the pillared avenue of the Piazzetta, exhibits a scene probably unique in the world. The singular assemblage of ships and galleys, often of the most grotesque construction, from every part of the Mediterranean; the concourse of Turks, Greeks, and Asiatics on the quay; the glittering aspect of the barques and gondolas which in every direction traverse the harbour, mark the approach to the Eastern world; but the noble domes of St Georgio Maggiore, the Reddentre, and the Madonna della Salute, bespeak the taste of Italy, and the predominance of the Christian faith. Altogether, Venice produces an impression never to be effaced from the mind of the traveller, the recollection of which recurs to the latest period of life with its bright skies, glassy waves, and glowing sunsets, like the visions of bliss seen in earlier and enthusiastic days.

32.
Rapid progress of democratic ideas in the cities of the Venetian territory, which are secretly encouraged by Napoleon.

The proximity of the Venetian continental provinces to those which had recently been revolutionised by the Republican arms, and the sojourning of the French armies among the ardent youth of its principal cities, naturally and inevitably led to the rapid propagation of democratic principles among their inhabitants. This took place more particularly after the victories of Rivoli and the fall of Mantua had dispelled all dread of the return of the Austrian forces. Everywhere revolutionary clubs and committees were formed in the towns, who corresponded with the Republican authorities at Milan, and openly expressed a wish to throw off the yoke of the Venetian oligarchy. During the whole winter of 1796, the democratic party, in all the continental states of Venice, was in a state of unceasing agitation; and although Napoleon was far from desirous of involving his

rear in hostilities, when actively engaged in the defiles of the Noric Alps, yet he felt anxious to establish a party able to counteract the efforts of the Venetian government, which already began to take umbrage at the menacing language and avowed sedition of their disaffected subjects. For this purpose, he secretly enjoined Captain Landrieux, chief of the staff to the cavalry, to correspond with the malecontents, and give unity and effect to their operations; while, to preserve the appearance of neutrality, he gave orders to General Kilmaine to direct all the officers and soldiers under his command to give neither counsel nor assistance to the disaffected.¹

Landrieux undertook a double part: while, on the one hand, in obedience to Napoleon's commands, and in conjunction with the ardent democrats of the Italian towns, he excited the people to revolt, and organised the means of their resistance; on the other, he entered into a secret correspondence with the Venetian government, and despatched his agent, Stephani, to Ottolini, the chief magistrate of Bergamo, to detail the nature and extent of the conspiracy which was on foot, and inform him that it aimed to separate entirely its continental possessions from the Venetian republic. By this double perfidy did this hypocritical chief of the staff render inevitable a rupture between France and Venice;* for while, on the one hand, he excited the democratic party against the government, on the other, he gave the government too good reasons to adopt measures of coercion against the democratic party and their French allies. The revolt came on, however, sooner than was either intended or desirable. It is an easy matter to excite the passions of democracy; but it is rarely that the leaders who fan the flame can allay it at the point which they desire.² The vehement language and enthusiastic conduct of the

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¹ Corresp.
Confid. de
Nap. iv. 289.
Journ. x. 120,
121. Bott.
ii. 189, 190,
191. Nap.
iv. 129.

33.
Napoleon's
perfidious
measures.

² Cor. Conf.
de Nap. iv.
289. Hard.
iv. 226, 228.

* "Landrieux," said Napoleon, in his secret despatch to the Directory, "instigated the revolt in Bergamo and Brescia, and was paid for it; at the same time he revealed the plot to the Venetian government, and was paid for that also by them."—*Corresp. Confid.* iv. 287.

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French soldiers, joined to the secret machinations of their chief, brought on an explosion in the Venetian territories sooner than was expedient for the interests either of the general or of the army.

34.
Democratic
insurrection
breaks out
in the Venetian
provinces, and
spreads to
all the chief
towns.

Napoleon's constant object was, by the terror of an insurrection in their continental possessions, to induce the government to unite cordially in a league with France, and make the desired concessions to the popular party ; but having failed in his endeavours, he marched for the Tagliamento, leaving insurrection ready to break out in all the provinces in his rear. On the morning of the 12th March, the revolt began at Bergamo, in consequence of the arrest of the leaders of the insurrection ; the insurgents declared openly that they were supported by the French, despatched couriers to Milan and the principal towns of Lombardy to obtain succour, and besought the Republican commander of the castle to support them with his forces. But he declined to interfere ostensibly in their behalf, though he countenanced their projected union with the Cisalpine Republic. A provisional government was soon established, which instantly announced to the newly-born Cispadane Republic that Bergamo had recovered its liberty, and their desire to be united with that state ; and concluded with these words :—" Let us live, let us fight, and, if necessary, die together ; thus should all free people do : let us then for ever remain united ; you, the French, and ourselves." The example speedily spread to other towns. Brescia, under the instigation of Landrieux, openly threw off its allegiance, and disarmed the Venetian troops in presence of the French soldiers, who neither checked nor supported the insurrection. At Crema, the insurgents were introduced into the gates by a body of French cavalry, and, having speedily overturned the Venetian authorities, proclaimed their union with the Cispadane Republic.¹

¹ Jom. x.
122. Th. ix.
79, 80. Nap.
iv. 130, 131.
Bot. ii. 192,
194.

These alarming revolts excited the utmost consternation at Venice ; and the Senate, not daring to act openly

against insurgents who declared themselves supported by the Republican commanders, wrote to the Directory, and despatched Pesaro to the headquarters of Napoleon, to complain of the countenance given by his troops to the revolt of their subjects. The Venetian deputies came up with the French general at Görizia; he feigned surprise at the intelligence, but endeavoured to take advantage of the terror of the republic to induce them to submit to increased exactions. They represented that the French armies had occupied the principal fortresses and castles of the republic, and that, having thus obtained the vantage-ground, they were bound either to take some steps to show that they disapproved of the revolt, which was organised in their name, or to cede these places to the Republic, and permit them to exert their own strength in restoring order in their dominions. Napoleon positively declined to do either of these things, but constantly urged the deputies to throw themselves into the arms of France. "That I should arm against our friends, against those who have received us kindly, and wish to defend us, in favour of our enemies, of those who hate and seek to ruin us, is impossible. Never will I turn my arms against the principles of the Revolution; to them I owe in part all my success. But I offer you, in perfect sincerity, my friendship and my counsels: unite yourselves cordially to France; make the requisite changes in your constitution; and, without employing force with the Italian people, I will induce them to yield to order and peace." They passed from that to the contributions for the use of the army. Hitherto Venice had furnished supplies to the French army, as she had previously done to the Imperial. The Venetian deputies insisted that Napoleon, having now entered the Hereditary States, should cease to be any longer a burden on their resources. This was far from being the French general's intention; for he was desirous of levying no requisitions on the Austrian territories, for fear of rousing a national war among the inhabitants.

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35.
Consternation at Venice. Venetians send deputies to Napoleon. His duplicity.

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The commissaries, whom the Venetian government had secretly commissioned to furnish supplies to the French army, had ceased their contributions, and they had in consequence commenced requisitions in the Venetian territories. "That is a bad mode of proceeding," said Napoleon; "it vexes the inhabitants, and opens the door to innumerable abuses. Give me a *million a-month* as long as the campaign lasts; the Republic will account to you for it, and you will receive more than a million's worth in the cessation of pillage. You have nourished my enemies, you must do the same to me." The envoys answered that their treasury was exhausted. "If you have no money," said he, "take it from the Duke of Modena, or levy it on the property of the Russians, Austrians, and English, which are lying in your depôts. But beware of proceeding to hostilities. If, while I am engaged in a distant campaign, you light the flames of war in my rear, you have sealed your own ruin. That which might have been overlooked when I was in Italy becomes an unpardonable offence when I am in Germany." Such was the violence with which this haughty conqueror treated a nation which was not only neutral, but had for nine months furnished gratuitously all the supplies for his army; and such the degradation which this ancient republic had prepared for itself, by the timid policy which hoped to avert danger by declining to face it.¹

¹ Jom. x.
124, 125.
Bott. ii. 201.
Th. ix. 85.
87. Nap.
iv. 87.

36.
The Venetians at last resolve to act against the insurgents.

The Venetian government at length saw that they could no longer delay taking a decided part. A formidable insurrection, organised in the name and under the sanction of the Republican authorities, was rapidly spreading in their continental possessions, great part of which had already joined the Cisalpine Republic; and the general-in-chief, instead of taking any steps to quench the flame, had only demanded fresh contributions from a state already exhausted by his exactions. They resolved, therefore, by a large majority, to act vigorously against the insurgents, but without venturing to engage in hostilities with the

French forces—an ill-judged step, the result of timidity and irresolution, which exposed them to all the perils of war without any of its favourable chances; which irritated without endangering the enemy, and allowed the French general to select his own time for wreaking upon the state, alone and unbefriended, the whole weight of Republican vengeance.¹

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¹ Bott. ii.
210, 211.
Jom. x. 125.

The retreat of the French from the valley of the Adige, and the irruption of the Croats into Friuli, encouraged the Venetian government to commence hostilities against their refractory subjects. But before that took place, tumults and bloodshed had arisen spontaneously, and about the same time, in many different parts of the territory, in consequence of the furious passions which were roused by the collision between the aristocracy on the one hand, and the populace on the other. Matters were also precipitated by an unworthy fraud, perpetrated by the Republican agents at Milan. This was the preparation and publishing of an address, purporting to be from Battaglia, governor of Verona, calling upon the citizens faithful to Venice to rise in arms, to murder the insurgents, and chase the French soldiers from the Venetian territory. This fabrication, which was written at Milan by a person in the French interest, of the name of Salvador, was extensively diffused by Landrieux, the secret agent of the French general; and though it bore such absurdity on its face as might have detected the forgery, yet, in the agitated state of the country, a spark was sufficient to fire the train; and hostilities, from the excited condition of men's minds, would, in all probability, have been commenced, even without this unworthy device. The mountaineers and the inhabitants of the Alpine valleys flew to arms; large bodies of the peasantry collected together; and everything was prepared for the irruption of a considerable force into the plains of Brescia.²

37.
Hostilities
break out
between the
two parties.

² Jom. x.
126. Bott.
ii. 211, 215.
Th. ix. 116.

The democrats in Brescia, instigated by French agents, resolved instantly to commence hostilities. A body of

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38.

The counter-insurrection spreads immensely. 1st April.

4th April.
6th April.
1 Corresp.
Confid. de
Nap. iv. 289.
Jom. x. 126.
129. Bott.
ii. 200. Th.
ix. 90.

twelve hundred men issued from their gates, accompanied by four pieces of cannon, served by French gunners, to attack Salò, a fortified town, occupied by Venetians, on the western bank of the lake of Garda. The expedition reached the town, and was about to take possession of it, when they were suddenly attacked and routed by a body of mountaineers, who made prisoners two hundred Poles of the legion of Dombrowski, and so completely surprised the French that they narrowly escaped the same fate. This success contributed immensely to excite the movements; large bodies of peasants issued from the valleys, and speedily ten thousand armed men appeared before the gates of Brescia. The inhabitants, however, prepared for their defence, and soon a severe cannonade commenced on both sides. General Kilmaine, upon this, collected a body of fifteen hundred men, chiefly Poles, under General Lahoz, attacked and defeated the mountaineers, and drove them back to their mountains; they were soon after followed by the French flotilla and land forces, and Salò was taken and sacked.¹

The intelligence of these events excited the utmost indignation at Venice. The part taken by the French troops in supporting the revolt could no longer be concealed; and the advance of Laudon, at the same time, in the Tyrol, produced such apparently well-founded hopes of the approaching overthrow of the Republicans, that nothing but the vicinity of Victor's corps prevented the Senate from openly declaring against the French. The Austrian general spread, in the vicinity of Verona, the most extravagant reports, that he was advancing at the head of sixty thousand men, that Napoleon had been defeated in the Noric Alps, and that the junctions of the corps in his rear would speedily compel him to surrender. These statements excited the most vehement agitation at Verona, where the patrician party, from their proximity to the revolutionary cities, were in imminent danger, and a popular insurrection might be hourly expected. The

39.

Continued indecision of the Senate in regard to France, and affected anger of Napoleon.

government, however, deeming it too hazardous to come to an open rupture with the French, continued their temporising policy ; they even agreed to give the million a month which the Republican general demanded, and contented themselves with redoubling the vigilance of the police, and arresting such of their own subjects as were suspected of seditious practices. Meanwhile Napoleon, having received intelligence of the steps which the Venetian government had adopted to crush the insurrection in their dominions, and the check which the Republican troops, in aiding them, had received at Salo, affected the most violent indignation. Having already concluded the armistice at Leoben, and agreed to abandon the whole continental possessions of Venice to Austria, he foresaw in these events the means of satisfying the avidity of the Imperialists, and procuring advantageous terms for the Republic, at the expense of the helpless state of Venice. He therefore sent his aide-de-camp, Junot, with a menacing letter to the Senate, in which he threatened them with the whole weight of the Republican vengeance, if they did not instantly liberate the Polish and French prisoners, surrender to him the authors of the hostilities, and disband all their armaments. Junot was received by the Senate ; to whom he read the imperious letter of Napoleon ; but they prevailed on him to suspend his threats, and despatched two senators to the Republican headquarters, to endeavour to bring matters to an accommodation.¹

But the very day after the deputies set out from Venice for Leoben, an explosion took place on the Adige, which gave the French general too fair a pretext to break off the negotiation. The levy *en masse* of the peasants, to the number of twenty thousand, had assembled in the neighbourhood of Verona ; three thousand Venetian troops had been sent into that town by the Senate, and the near approach of the Austrians from the Tyrol promised effectual support. The tocsin sounded ; the people flew to arms, and put to death in cold blood four hundred wounded

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10th April.

15th April.
1 Bott. ii.
211, 217,
218. Th. ix.
112, 113.
Jom. x. 131.
Nap. iv. 139.40.
Massacre at
Verona.

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17th April.

¹ Jom. x.
132, 135.
Th. ix. 120.
Balland and
Kilmaine's
Account.
Confid.
Corresp. de
Nap. iii. 124,
167.

41.
Which is
speedily
suppressed
by the
French
troops.
Massacre
at Lido.
18th April.
28th April.

French in the hospitals. Indignant at these atrocious cruelties, General Balland, who commanded the French garrison in the forts, fired on the city with red-hot balls. Conflagrations soon broke out in several quarters, and although various attempts at accommodation were made, they were all rendered abortive by the furious passions of the multitude. The cannonade continued on both sides, the forts were closely invested, the city in many parts was in flames, the French already began to feel the pressure of hunger, and the garrison of Fort Chiusa, which capitulated from want of provisions, was inhumanly put to death, to revenge the ravages of the bombardment.¹

But the hour of retribution was at hand ; and a terrible reverse awaited the sanguinary excesses of the Venetian insurrection. The day after hostilities commenced, the intelligence of the armistice was received, and the Austrian troops retired into the Tyrol ; two days after, the columns of General Chabran appeared round the town, and invested its walls ; while, to complete their misfortunes, on the 23d the accounts of the signature of the preliminaries of Leoben arrived. The multitude immediately passed from the highest exultation to the deepest dejection ; and they now sought only to deprecate the wrath of the conqueror, to whom they had given so much cause of hostility. Submission was immediately made ; the authors of the cruelties were shot ; a general disarming was effected among the peasantry ; and a contribution of 1,100,000 francs (£44,000) levied on the city. The plains were speedily covered with French troops ; the united divisions of Victor and Kilmaine occupied successively Vicenza and Padua, and soon the French standards were discovered from the steeples of Venice on the shores of the Laguna. These excesses were the work of popular passion, equally sanguinary and inconstant, when not rightly directed, in all ages and countries ; but an event of the same kind stained the last days of the Venetian government itself. A French vessel of four guns approached the entrance of

23d April.

the harbour of Lido, in opposition to a rule of the Venetian Senate, to which all nations, not excepting the English themselves, were accustomed to yield obedience. A cannonade ensued between the batteries on shore and the vessel, and the French ship having been captured by the galleys on the station, the captain and four of the crew were massacred, and eleven wounded. Immediately after, a decree of the Senate publicly applauded this cruel and unnecessary act. These sanguinary proceedings sufficiently verify the old observation, that pusillanimity and cruelty are allied to each other; and that none are so truly humane as the brave and the free. They do not in the slightest degree palliate the treachery of the French, or the rapacity of the Imperialists, the former of whom had instigated the revolt of the Venetian democrats, and signed the partition of Venice *before* either of these events took place;* but they go far to diminish the regret which otherwise would be felt at the success of unprincipled ambition, and the fall of the oldest republic of the Christian world.¹

The Venetian senate, thunderstruck by the intelligence they had received, did their utmost to appease the wrath of the victors. Their situation had become to the last degree perilous, for they were precipitated into hostilities with the victorious Republic, at the very time when Austria, discomfited, was retiring from the strife, and when their own dominions had become a prey to the most furious discord. The democratic party, following the

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¹ Bott. ii.
232, 242,
243. Jom.
x. 139, 140.
Nap. iv. 141.
Kilmaine's
Report.
Conf. Cor.
iii. 155, 167.

42.
Efforts of
the Venetian
Senate to
avert the
storm.

* The massacre at Verona took place on the 17th April, that at Lido on the 23d, while the preliminaries of Leoben, which assigned the whole of the continental Venetian territories to Austria, were agreed to on the 9th, at Judenburg, and the formal treaty was drawn up on the 16th, in Carinthia, before even the first of these events had occurred, and signed on the 18th. Napoleon has given the clearest proof of his sense of the unjustifiable nature of this aggression, by having, in his memoirs on this subject, *entirely kept out of view the dates*, and made it appear as if his menacing letter by Junot to the Senate was the consequence of the massacre of April 17, at Verona, when in fact it was dated the 9th April, at Judenburg, at a time when, so far from the Venetian government having given any cause of complaint to the French, they had only suffered aggressions at their hands, in the assistance openly lent to the demo-

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French standards, had revolted at Vicenza, Treviso, Padua, and all the continental cities, while a vehement faction in the capital itself was threatening to overthrow the constitution of the state. A deputation was sent to Gratz to endeavour to pacify the conqueror, and another to Paris, with ample funds at the command of both, to corrupt the sources of influence at these places. They succeeded, by the distribution of a very large sum, in gaining over the Directory;* but all their efforts with Napoleon were fruitless. His was not only a character totally inaccessible to that species of corruption, but he was too deeply implicated in the partition of the Venetian territories, which he had just signed, to forego so fortunate a pretext for vindicating it as these excesses had afforded.¹

¹ Nap. iv.
144. Jom. x.
142. Bott.
ii. 223, 224.

43.
Resources
still at the
command of
Venice.

Venice had still at its command most formidable means of defence, if the spirit of the inhabitants had been equal to the emergency. They had within the city eight thousand seamen and fourteen thousand regular troops, thirty-seven galleys and one hundred and sixty gun-boats, carrying eight hundred cannon, for the defence of the Lagunæ; and all the approaches to the capital were commanded by powerful batteries. Provisions existed for eight months, fresh water for two; the nearest islands were beyond the reach of cannon-shot from the shore, and, with the assistance of the fleets of England, they might have bid defiance to all the armies of France. The circumstances of the republic were not nearly so desperate as they had been in former times, when they extricated themselves with glory from their difficulties; when the league of

cratic rebels, and the attack by the Republican forces on Salo. Conflicts, indeed, had taken place between the Venetian insurgents, stimulated by the French, and the aristocratic adherents; but the government had committed no act of hostility, the monthly supplies were in course of regular payment, and the French ambassador was still at Venice. — See *Napoleon*, iv. 142. By not attending minutely to this matter, Sir W. Scott has totally misrepresented the transactions which led to the fall of Venice, and drawn them in far too favourable colours for the hero whose life he has so ably delineated. — See *SCOTT'S Napoleon*, iii. 315, 316.

* Two hundred thousand crowns, as a private bribe, were placed at the disposal of Barras. — See *HARDENBERG*, v. 19; and *Napoleon in O'MEARA*, 271.

Cambray had wrested from them all their territorial possessions, or when the Genoese fleet had seized the gates of the Lagunæ and blockaded their fleet at Malmocco. But the men were no longer the same. The poison of democracy had extinguished every feeling of patriotism in the middle, the enjoyments of luxury, every desire for independence among the senatorial classes; ages of prosperity had corrupted the sources of virtue, and the insane passion for equality vainly rose like a passing meteor to illuminate the ruins of a falling state.

On the 3d May, Napoleon published from Palma Nuova his declaration of war against Venice. He there complained that the Senate had taken advantage of the holy week to organise a furious war against France; that vast bodies of peasantry were armed and disciplined by troops sent out of the capital; that a crusade against the French was preached in all the churches; their detached bodies murdered, and the sick in the hospitals massacred; the crew of a French galley slain under the eyes of the Senate, and the authors of the tragedy publicly rewarded for the atrocious act. To this manifesto the Venetians replied, that the massacres complained of were not the work of government, but of individuals whom they could not control; that the popular passions had been excited by the ungovernable insolence of the Republican soldiery, and of the democratic party whom they had roused to open rebellion; that the first acts of aggression were committed by the French commanders, by publicly assisting the rebels in various encounters with the Venetian forces, long before the massacres complained of were committed; and that the only fault of which they were really guilty, consisted in their not having earlier divined the ambitious designs of the French general, and joined all their forces to the Austrian armies, when combating for a cause which must sooner or later be that of every independent state.¹

The French general was not long in following up his menaces, and preparing the execution of that unjustifiable

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44.
War declared by
Napoleon
against
Venice.
3d May.

¹ Bott. ii.
255. Nap.
iv. 147, 149.

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45.
Universal
revolt of all
the conti-
nental towns
of the Vene-
tian terri-
tory.

partition which had been decided upon between him and the Imperial cabinet. The Republican troops, in pursuance of the treaty of Leoben, rapidly evacuated Carinthia, and, returning by forced marches on their steps, soon appeared on the confines of the Lagunæ, within sight of the tower of St Mark. As they advanced, the republic became a prey to the passions, and torn by the factions, which are the general forerunners of national ruin. At the news of the proclamation of war, all the towns of the continental possessions of Venice revolted against the capital. Every city proclaimed its independence, and appointed a provisional government; Bergamo, Brescia, Padua, Vicenza, Bassano, Udina, constituted so many separate republics, who organised themselves after the model of the great French model, suppressed the convents, and confiscated their property, abolished all feudal rights, established national guards, and hoisted the tricolor flag.¹

¹ Nap. iv.
151, 152.
Jom. x. 144.

46.
Anarchy in
Venice it-
self. The
senate abdi-
cate.
1st and 3d
May.

Meanwhile Venice, itself a prey to the most vehement faction, was in a cruel state of perplexity. The senators met at the Doge's palace, and endeavoured, by untimely concessions, to satisfy the demands and revive the patriotism of the popular party—a vain expedient, founded upon utter ignorance of democratic ambition, which concessions dictated by fear can never satisfy, but which, in such a successful course, rushes forward, like an individual plunged in the career of passion, upon its own destruction. The patricians found themselves deprived of all the resources of government; a furious rabble filled the streets, demanding with loud cries the abdication of the senate, the immediate admission of the French troops, and the establishment of a government formed on a highly democratic basis; a revolutionary committee, formed of the most active of the middle orders, was in open communication with the French army, and rose in audacity with every concession from the government; the sailors of the fleet had manifested symptoms of insubordination; and the fidelity of the Slavonians, who constituted the

strength of the garrison, could not, it was ascertained, be relied on. These elements of anarchy, sufficient to have shaken the courage of the Roman senate, were too powerful for the weak and vacillating councils of the Venetian oligarchy. Yielding to the tempest which they could not withstand, they assembled in mournful silence on the 12th May, and after passing under review the exhausted resources and distracted state of the republic, voted, amidst the tears of all friends to their country, by a majority of five hundred and twelve to fourteen voices, the abdication of their authority. Shouts from the giddy multitude rent the sky; the tree of liberty was hoisted on the Place of St Mark; the democrats entered, amidst bloodshed and plunder, upon the exercise of their new-born sovereignty; and the revolutionary party fondly imagined that they were launched upon a boundless career of glory. But the real patriots, the men of sense and firmness, lamented the decision of the senate, and, retiring in silence to their homes, exclaimed with tears, "Venice is no more; St Mark has fallen!"¹

While the revolutionists were thus bartering their country for the vain chimera of democratic equality, and the unworthy descendants of Dandolo and Morosini were surrendering without a struggle the glories and the independence of a thousand years, more generous sentiments burst forth among the labouring classes, often the last depositaries, in a corrupted age, of public virtue. No sooner was the mournful act communicated to the people than they flocked together from all quarters, and with loud cries demanded the restoration of the standard of St Mark, and arms to combat for the independence of their country. Several bloody contests ensued between them and the revolutionary party; but the populace, however ardent, cannot maintain a contest for any length of time when destitute of leaders. The cannon of the republicans dispersed the frantic assemblages;² and, amidst the shouts of the insane revolutionists, the French troops

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12th May.

¹ Solkowski's Report to Napoleon. Conf. Corr. iii. 233, 241. Bott. ii. 273, 275. Th. ix. 138.

47.

The populace still endeavour to resist the subjugation of the state, but Venice falls.

² Bott. ii. 276, 278. Th. ix. 138, 139. Journ. x. 150. Solkowski's Report to Napoleon. Conf. Corr. iii. 235, 241.

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48.
Joy of the
democratic
party, and
treaty of
16th May
between
Napoleon
and Venice.

were conducted by Venetian boats to the Place of St Mark, where a foreign standard had not been seen for fifteen hundred years, but where the colours of independence were never again destined to wave.

The French troops were not long of securing to themselves the spoils of their revolutionary allies. The Golden Book, the record of the senators of Venice, was burned at the foot of the tree of liberty ; and while the democrats were exulting over the destruction of this emblem of their ancient subjection, their allies were depriving them of all the means of future independence. The treasures of the republic were instantly seized by the French generals ; but instead of the vast sums which they expected, 1,800,000 francs, belonging to the Duke of Modena, were all that fell into their hands. All that remained in the celebrated harbour of St Mark's was made prize of : but such was its dilapidated condition that they with difficulty fitted out two sixty-four gun-ships, and a few frigates, out of the arsenal of the Queen of the Adriatic. The remainder of the fleet, consisting of five sail of the line, six frigates, and eleven galleys, was not in a condition to keep the sea ; and Admiral Bruéys received orders from the Directory to set sail to secure the fruit of the republican fraternisation. In the middle of July he arrived at Venice, where his fleet was paid, equipped, and fed at the expense of the infant republic—a burden which began to open the eyes of the revolutionary party, when too late, to the consequences of their conduct. The bitter fruits of republican alliance were still more poignantly felt when the conditions of the treaty of Milan, signed by Napoleon, with the new government of Venice, became known, which stipulated the abolition of the aristocracy ; the formation of a popular government ; the introduction of a division of French troops into the capital ; a contribution of three millions in money, three millions' worth of naval stores, and the surrender of three ships of the line and two frigates,¹ with many illustrious works of

¹ *Jom. x.*
152. *Bott.*
ii. 277, 279.
Th. ix. 140.
See the se-
cret articles
in *Corresp.*
Confid. de
Nap. iii. 178.
and the
treaty in
Martens,
vi. 391.

art. Among the rest, the famous horses, brought in the car of victory from Corinth to Rome, thence to Constantinople, and thence to Venice, were carried off in triumph by the conquering Republic.*

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While these memorable events were going forward on the southern side of the Alps, the war languished on the frontier of the Rhine. Latour commanded the Imperial army on the Upper Rhine; his troops, after the departure of the veteran bands under the Archduke, did not exceed thirty-four thousand infantry and six thousand horse; while those under the orders of Werneck, on the Lower Rhine, were about thirty thousand, and twenty thousand were shut up within the fortresses on that stream. The French forces were much more numerous: the army of the Rhine and Moselle, under Moreau, being sixty thousand strong; while that of the Sambre and Meuse, cantoned between Düsseldorf and Coblenz, amounted to nearly seventy thousand. The latter was under the command of Hoche, whose vigour and abilities gave every promise of success in the ensuing campaign; while the possession of the *têtes-de-pont* at Düsseldorf and Neuwied afforded a facility for commencing operations, which the army on the upper branch of the river did not possess since the loss of Kehl and the *tête-de-pont* at Huningen. The rapidity and energy with which Napoleon commenced operations on the banks of the Tagliamento before the middle of March, inflamed the rivalry of the generals on the Rhine; while the interests of the

49.
State of the
armies on
the Rhine.

* The seizure of these horses was an act of pure robbery. The Venetians, in the secret articles, agreed to surrender "twenty pictures and five hundred manuscripts," but no statues. Nevertheless, the French carried off the horses from the Place of St Mark, and put them on the triumphal arch in the Tuilleries. In like manner, the secret articles only bound the Venetians to furnish three millions' worth of naval stores; but Napoleon ordered the French admiral Bruëys, who was sent to superintend the spoliation, to carry off the *whole stores* to Toulon; and the Directory wrote to Berthier in these terms: "Que toute l'artillerie, tous les magasins, de guerre et de bouche, qui se trouvait à Venise, soient transportés à Corfou, Ancone, et Ferrare, de manière que vous rendiez Venise *sans une seule pièce de canon*."—See *Secret Correspondence of Napoleon*, iii. 170, and iv. 427.

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Republic imperiously required that the campaign should simultaneously be commenced in both quarters, in order that the army most advanced should not find itself engaged alone with the strength of the Austrian monarchy. Nevertheless, such was the exhausted state of the treasury, from the total ruin of the paper system, and the dilapidation of the public revenues during the convulsions of the Revolution, that the Directory was unable to furnish Moreau with the equipage necessary for crossing the Rhine; and he was obliged to go in person to Paris, in the beginning of April, and pledge his private fortune to procure that necessary part of his equipments. At length, the obstacles having been overcome, he returned to the Rhine, and completed his preparations for crossing that river.¹

¹Th. ix. 110.
Jom. x. 71,
74.

50.
Passage of
that river at
Diersheim,
and defeat
of the Aus-
trians.
20th April.

The point selected for this important enterprise was Diersheim; the preparations of the enemy in the neighbourhood of Strassburg rendering hazardous any attempt to cross near that town. Seventy barks were collected in the Ill, a small stream which falls into the Rhine, and directed to Diersheim on the night of the 19th April, while two false attacks above and below that place were prepared, to distract the attention of the enemy. Delays unavoidable in the collection of the flotilla having retarded the embarkation of the advanced guard till six o'clock on the following morning, it was evident that a surprise was impossible, the Austrians having taken the alarm, and appearing in considerable force on the opposite shore. The boats, however, pulled gallantly across the stream, till they came within reach of the grape-shot from the enemy's cannon, when the shower of balls forced them to take shelter behind an island, where they landed, and captured three hundred Croats, who composed its garrison. From this they forded the narrow branch of the Rhine which separates the island from the German shore, and made themselves masters of Diersheim. Towards noon they were there attacked by the Austrians, who had

received a reinforcement of four thousand men from a neighbouring camp; but the attack was gallantly repulsed by Desaix and DAVOUST,* who there gave earnest of that cool intrepidity and sagacious foresight by which his future career was eminently distinguished. During the whole day, the Imperialists renewed their attacks with great intrepidity, and in the end with twelve thousand men; but they were constantly repulsed by the obstinate valour of the Republican infantry. On the following day, the attack was renewed with increased forces, but no better success; and the bridge having, in the mean time, been established, Moreau began to debouche in great strength; upon which the Austrians commenced their retreat, during which they sustained considerable loss from the Republican cavalry.

Thus, by a bold and able exertion, was the passage of the Rhine secured, and all the fruits of the bloody sieges of Kehl and Huningen lost to the Imperialists. In these actions the loss of the Austrians was three thousand prisoners and twenty pieces of cannon, besides two thousand killed and wounded. When it is recollected that

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51.
Operations
cut short by
the armis-
tice.

* Louis Nicolas Davoust, afterwards Prince of Echmühl, and Marshal of France, one of the most distinguished generals of the Revolution, was born at Annoux in Burgundy, on the 10th May 1770, of a respectable and noble family. Destined early for the profession of arms, he was sent to the Military School of Brienne, as a gentleman cadet, in September 1780, when Napoleon was there. In 1788 he entered the army as a sub-lieutenant in the regiment of Royal-Champagne, in which he served till autumn 1791, when he was dismissed the service, in consequence of having taken part with the private soldiers in a mutiny against their officers during the political disturbances of the preceding year. Ardent, impetuous, impatient of control, his fretful humour chafed against the restraint of military subordination, and found a freer and more suitable vent in the tumult and energy of the revolutionary corps. Restored by his dismissal from the army to the class of citizens, he was, from his acquaintance with his profession, and ardent republican ideas, named lieutenant-colonel of the 3d battalion of the Volunteers of the Yonne, at the age of twenty-two. To an officer of the army, the embracing the new opinions was in those days a certain passport to popular election and rapid promotion. In that capacity he took part in the campaign of 1792, in Champagne: and, determined in his adhesion to the cause of the Revolution through all its excesses, he presented himself at the bar of the Assembly to testify his own adherence, and that of his corps, to the overthrow of the throne.

Biography of
Davoust.

He was soon called to evince, in a decisive crisis, his attachment to the

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this passage was gained not by stratagem, but by main force, in presence of a considerable part of the Austrian army, and that it undid at once all the advantages gained by them in the preceding winter, it must ever be regarded as a glorious deed of arms, and one of the most memorable military achievements of the revolutionary war. Taught by the disasters of the preceding campaign, Moreau resolved to pursue the corps of Starray with vigour, and prevent that methodical retreat which had proved so beneficial to the Imperialists in the previous year. For this purpose he pushed his advanced guard on to Renchen the very day after the passage was completed; and was in the high-road to further successes, when he was interrupted by the intelligence of the armistice of Leoben, which terminated the campaign in that quarter.¹

¹ *Jom. x. 77,
86. Th. ix.
111. St-Cyr,
iv. 165, 184,
190.*

52.
*Operations
of Hoche on
the Lower
Rhine.
Passage of
the Rhine
forced at
Neuwied.*

The campaign was in like manner cut short in the midst of opening successes on the Lower Rhine. The army put there at the disposal of Hoche, was one of the most numerous and well appointed which the Republic sent into the field, and particularly remarkable for the numbers and fine condition of the cavalry and artillery. Hoche resolved to effect the passage with the bulk of his

principles of the Revolution. In April 1793, Dumourier, having been summoned to the bar of the Convention, on account of the suspicion under which he laboured of a design to restore the Bourbons, had quitted his headquarters at Saint-Amand, and was moving towards the cantonments of the regiment of Deux-Ponts, which was entirely at his devotion, when he met, early in the morning, on the banks of the Scheldt, the Volunteers of the Yonne, whom Davoust was leading to Valenciennes to support the authority of the Convention. Without a moment's hesitation, Davoust ordered the leading company to fire on Dumourier, and the group of staff officers by whom he was surrounded. The men, knowing he had been denounced by the Convention, obeyed. Dumourier's horse was shot under him, two of his attendants were killed, and the general himself only escaped by mounting on the horse of a trooper who had fallen, and flying with the utmost haste across the frontier. This decided act at once drove Dumourier into exile and made Davoust's fortune. Arrested in the first instance, for such an act of insubordination as firing on his general, he was within twenty-four hours liberated by order of the all-powerful Convention, and immediately received rapid promotion. In July 1793, he was promoted to the rank of general of brigade, and was on the eve of being made general of division when the decree, 29th August of that year, which deprived all persons of noble birth in the army of their commands, reduced him to a

forces from Neuwied, and to facilitate that purpose by a simultaneous movement at Düsseldorf. The Austrians were so far deceived by these movements, that they advanced with the greater part of their forces to Altenkirchen, in order to stop the progress of the troops from Düsseldorf, leaving only a small body in front of Neuwied. No sooner did he perceive that they had fallen into the snare, than Hoche debouched rapidly from the *tête-de-pont* at that place at the head of thirty-six thousand men. Kray commanded the Imperialists in that quarter; and his position, blocking up the roads leading from the bridge, was strongly fortified, and covered by powerful batteries. The attack of the Republicans was impetuous; but the resistance of the Imperialists, though greatly inferior in number, was not less vigorous; and no advantage was gained by the assailants till the fortified village of Hulsendorf was carried by a concentric attack from several of the French masses, after which the other redoubts, taken in flank, were successively stormed, and the Austrians driven back, with the loss of five thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, twenty-seven pieces of cannon, and sixty caissons. At the same time

18th April.

private station. After the 9th Thermidor, however, in July 1794, he was restored to his rank as general of brigade, and took an active part in the campaigns of 1794 and 1795, on the Rhine, in the course of which he was made prisoner by the Austrians, but soon after exchanged. Early in 1797 he distinguished himself by his coolness and decision in the passage of the Rhine, under Moreau at Diersheim; and added to the fame he had already acquired by his intrepidity in the combats of Hohenblau, Kinzig, and Hasslach, in the preceding campaign. The peace, or rather the truce, which followed, suspended all military operations in Germany; and, wearied of inactivity, he followed Napoleon into Egypt. Thenceforward he needs no biography: his name will be found associated with all the greatest deeds of the Emperor from the Pyramids to Waterloo. He was cool and collected in danger, possessing an admirable *coup-d'œil* on the field, and by his indefatigable energy and methodical arrangements in a campaign, always had his troops in much better order than any other corps, except the Guards, in the army. But he was inexorable and severe as a general, often cruel and rapacious in military command, coarse and vulgar in his manners, and so passionate in his demeanour that an officer who would not have hesitated to face a battery of Russian cannon often trembled when brought into the presence of the Prince of Echmühl.—See *Biographie Universelle, Supplément*, lxii. 158, 173; and DUMOURIER'S *Memoirs*, iv. 173, 175.

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¹ Jom. x. 95,
93. Th. ix.
110. Ney. i.
271, 276.

the left wing of the army crossed the Sieg, advanced to Ukerath and Altenkirchen, which were abandoned as soon as it was known that the bulk of the enemy's forces was advancing from Neuwied, and on the following night they effected their junction with the victors on the field of battle.¹

53.
Hostilities
stopped by
the arms-
tice of Leo-
ben.
19th April.
21st April.

After this disaster, Werneck retired to Neukirchen, and united the two divisions of his army; but, finding that he was unable to make head against the immense forces of his opponent, which were nearly double his own, he fell back behind the Lahn. Thither he was immediately followed by the victorious general; and, the Imperialists having continued their retreat towards the Maine, Hoche conceived the design of cutting them off before they crossed that river. For this purpose, he pushed forward his right wing, under Lefebvre, to Frankfurt, while the centre and left continued to press the enemy on the high-road, by which they continued their retreat. The advanced guard of Lefebvre was at the gates of that opulent city, when hostilities were suspended, by the intelligence of the preliminaries of Leoben, to the infinite mortification of the French general, who saw himself thus interrupted, by his more fortunate rival, in a career of success, from which the most glorious effects might have been anticipated to the Republic.²

² Jom. x. 96,
103. Th. ix.
110.

54.
State of
Prussia dur-
ing this
year. Its
policy.
Death of the
King, and
his charac-
ter.
16th Nov.

Prussia, during this eventful year, adhered steadily to the system of armed neutrality, inclining rather to France, and supporting the protection of the associated states within the proscribed line, which was begun by the treaty of Bâle in 1795, and consolidated by the convention of 5th August 1796. The health of the King had for some time been visibly declining, and he at length expired at Berlin, on the 16th November; having, as his last act, bestowed the decoration of the order of the Black Eagle on his favourite minister Haugwitz. Though neither endowed with shining civil nor remarkable military talents, few monarchs have conferred

greater benefits on their country than this sovereign.* Among the many and valuable territorial acquisitions which he made, is to be reckoned the important commercial city and fortress of Dantzig, which commands the navigation of the Vistula, and holds the keys of Poland. The army also, during his reign, was increased by twenty-five thousand men; and, like his great predecessor, he ever considered that arm as the main foundation of the public strength. Much of this increase is doubtless to be ascribed to a fortunate combination of extraneous things; and it chiefly arose from the monstrous partition of Poland. Yet something also must be admitted to have been due to the wisdom of the cabinet, which skilfully turned these circumstances to its own advantage, and contrived to reap nothing but profit from a stormy period, deeply checkered to other states by disaster. But in the close of his reign, the national jealousy of Austria, and partiality for France, were carried to an unreasonable length; and in the unwise desertion of the cause of Europe, by this important monarchy, is to be found one of the principal causes of the disasters which subsequently befell itself. The King was simple and unostentatious in his habits; addicted to conviviality, but rather on account of the pleasures of the table, than from any capacity to appreciate the refinements of conversation; good-humoured in general, but subject to occasional and ungovernable fits of passion. Hardly adequate to the consideration of important subjects of policy himself, he at least had the sense to intrust the administration of public affairs to able ministers. He was fond of music, and distinguished by a marked predilection for architecture, which caused his reign to be signalised by the construction of several noble and imposing edifices.

* During his reign, the territory of the monarchy was augmented by 2200 square (German) miles, and its population by 2,500,000 souls. He received from his uncle, the Great Frederick, 3600 square miles, and 6,000,000 of inhabitants; and left to his successor 5800 square miles, and 8,500,000 of inhabitants.

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¹ Hard. v.
33, 34, 37.

But his facility and passions led him into various irregularities in private life; and the court during his latter years was scandalised by the great ascendancy obtained by his profuse and rapacious mistress, the Countess Lichtenau, who was called to a severe account for her malversations by his successor.¹

55.
Accession of
Frederick
William
III. His
character.
Early mea-
sures and
policy.

Very different was the character of the youthful sovereign who now ascended the throne, FREDERICK WILLIAM III., afterwards called to such important destinies on the theatre of Europe. Born on the 3d August 1770, he was twenty-seven years of age when he succeeded to the crown; and his character and habits already presaged the glories of his reign. Severe and regular in private life, he had continued, amidst a dissolute court, a pattern of every domestic virtue. Married early to a beautiful and high-spirited princess, he bore to her that faithful attachment which her captivating qualities were so well fitted to excite, and which afterwards attracted the admiration, though they could not relax the policy or melt the sternness, of Napoleon, or excite a spark of chivalry in his cold and intellectual breast. He entertained a sincere, though undeserved, distrust of his own capacity in judging of state affairs, which at first threw him, to an unreasonable degree, under the government of his ministers, but was gradually removed during the difficulties and necessities of the later periods of his reign. His first acts were in the highest degree popular. On the day of his accession, he wrote a circular to the constituted authorities, informing them that he was aware of the abuses which had crept into various branches of the public service, and was resolved to rectify them; and at the same time gave an earnest of his sincerity by abolishing the monopoly of tobacco, which his father had re-established. The public indignation, rather than his own wishes, rendered the trial of the Countess Lichtenau unavoidably necessary: her wealth was known to be enormous, and many of the crown jewels were found in her possession.

She was obliged to surrender the greater part of her ill-gotten treasures, and assigned a pension of 15,000 francs; the remainder of her great fortune being settled on an hospital of Berlin. At the same time, the King, under the directions of Hardenberg, declared, in a circular addressed to all the states in the north of Germany, his resolution to continue those measures for the security of that part of the empire which his father had commenced; and in a holograph letter to the Directory, his wish to cultivate the good understanding with the French Republic, which ultimately led to such disastrous effects to Prussia and Europe.¹

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¹ Hard. v.
36, 43. Nap.
in Las Cas.
ii. 226.

In concluding the survey of these memorable contests, it is impossible to refuse to the genius of Napoleon that tribute which is justly due to it, not only for the triumphs in Italy, but for those in Germany. When he began his immortal campaign in the Maritime Alps, the Imperialists, greatly superior to their antagonists, were preparing to cross the Rhine, and carry the war into the territory of the Republic. It was his brilliant victories in Piedmont and Lombardy which compelled the Aulic Council to detach Wurmser with thirty thousand men from the Upper Rhine to the valley of the Adige; and thus not only reduced the Austrians to the defensive in Germany, but enabled the Republicans to carry the war into the centre of that country. Subsequently, the desperate conflicts round the walls of Mantua drew off the whole resources of the Austrian monarchy into that quarter, and the French advance into the Alps of Carinthia compelled the draft of thirty thousand of the best troops from Suabia, to defend the Hereditary States. Thus, with an army which, though frequently reinforced, never at one time amounted to sixty thousand men, he not only vanquished six successive armies in Italy and the Julian Alps, but drew upon himself great part of the weight of the German war; and, finally, without any other aid than that derived from the valour of his own soldiers, carried

56.
Retrospect
of the as-
tonishing
successes of
Napoleon.

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57.

Commence-
ment of ne-
gotiations at
Udina, near
Milan.

Splendour of
Napoleon's
court there.

hostilities into the Hereditary States, and dictated a glorious peace within sight of the steeples of Vienna.

Meanwhile Napoleon, sheathing for a time his victorious sword, established himself at the chateau of Montebello, near Milan—a beautiful summer residence, which overlooked great part of the plain of Lombardy. Negotiations for a final peace were there immediately commenced; before the end of May, the powers of the plenipotentiaries had been verified, and the work of treaties was in progress. There the future Emperor of the West held his court in more than regal splendour; the ambassadors of the Emperor of Germany, of the Pope, of Genoa, Venice, Naples, Piedmont, and the Swiss Republic, assembled to examine the claims of the several states which were the subject of discussion; and there weightier matters were to be determined, and dearer interests were at stake, than had ever been submitted to European diplomacy since the iron crown was placed on the brows of Charlemagne. Josephine Buonaparte there received the homage due to the transcendent glories of her youthful husband; Pauline displayed those brilliant charms which afterwards shone with so much lustre at the court of the Tuileries; and the ladies of Italy, captivated by the splendour of the spectacle, hastened to swell the illustrious train, and vied with each other for the admiration of those warriors whose deeds had filled the world with their renown. Already Napoleon acted as a sovereign prince; his power exceeded that of any living monarch; and he had entered on that dazzling existence which afterwards entranced and subdued the world.¹

¹ Th. ix. 144,
145. Nap.
iv. 155.
Bour. i.
289.

58.
Revolution
at Genoa,
brought
about by the
French.

The establishment of a republic on a democratic basis on both sides of the Po, the fermentation in the Venetian states, and the general belief of the irresistible power of the French armies, soon excited an extraordinary degree of enthusiasm at Genoa. The government there was vested in an aristocracy, which, though less jealous and exclusive than that at Venice, was far more resolute and

determined. As in all other old popular constitutions, the influence in the state had, in the progress of time, and from the gradual decay of public spirit, become vested in an inconsiderable number of families; but the principle of government was by no means exclusive, and many plebeians had recently been inscribed in the Golden Book, who had raised themselves to a rank worthy of that distinction. But these gradual changes were far from being sufficient for the fervent spirit of the age. The democratic party, under the secret influence of the French, had long been in activity; and it was calculated by the friends of revolution, that the resistance of the aristocratic senators could not possibly be prolonged beyond the end of August.¹

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¹ Sismondi,
Rep. Ital.
Jom. x. 140.
167. Th. ix.
143. Nap.
iv. 160.

A treaty had been concluded with the French Directory, by which Genoa purchased its neutrality by the payment of two millions of francs, a loan to the same amount, and the recall of the families exiled for their political opinions. But the vehemence of the revolutionary club, which met at the house of an apothecary of the name of Morandi, soon insisted on far greater concessions. Secretly stimulated by Napoleon, and the numerous agents of the French army,* they openly announced the assistance and protection of the Directory, and insisted for the immediate formation of the constitution on a new and highly democratic basis; while the senate, irresolute and divided, did not possess either the moral energy or physical strength to combat the forces by which they were assailed. The arrest of two of the popular party, who had proceeded to acts of sedition, brought matters to a crisis, and the intervention of the French minister, Faypoult, was sought to procure their liberation, and prevent the effusion of blood.

59.
Secret measures of Napoleon to produce it. The revolutionists are at first defeated.

* "Genoa," said Napoleon in his confidential despatch to the Directory, on the 19th May 1797, "loudly demands democracy: the senate has sent deputies to me to sound my intentions. It is more than probable that, in ten days, the aristocracy of Genoa will undergo the fate of that of Venice. There would then be three democratic republics in the north of Italy, which may hereafter be united into one."—*Confid. Despatch*, 19th May 1797; *Confid. Corresp.* iii. 170.

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22d May.

Instead of calming, he rather increased the effervescence; and the consequence was, that on the following day a general insurrection took place. The troops of the line wavered, the burgher guard could not be trusted, and the senators, reduced to their own resources, were pursued and massacred, and at length took refuge with the French minister, as the only means of appeasing the tumult. Upon this some of the patrician families, finding themselves deserted by their natural leaders, and seeing the dagger at their throats, put themselves at the head of their followers, with loud cries demanded arms from the senate, and brought in their faithful followers from the country to endeavour to stem the torrent. They soon prevailed over their revolutionary antagonists. The posts, which had been seized in the first burst of the tumult, were regained, the club Morandi was dispersed, the Genoese colours again floated on the city, and the tricolor flag, which the democrats had assumed, was torn down from the walls. The firmness of the aristocracy, supported by the courage of the rural population, had prevailed over the passions of democracy, and the independence of Genoa, but for foreign interference, was preserved.¹

23d April.
¹ *Jom.x.* 167,
170, 174.
Th. ix. 143,
144. *Nap.*
iv. 160, 164.
Bott. ii. 283,
284, 292.
Conf. Cor.
de Nap. iii.
170. See
the treaty
in *Martens*,
vi. 394.

60.
The French
then inter-
fere, and
vigorously
support the
democratic
party. The
senate upon
this sub-
mits.

But it was no part of the system of republican ambition to allow the revolutionary party to be subdued in any country which the arms of France could reach. In the course of these struggles, some Frenchmen and citizens of the Cisalpine Republic, who had taken an active part with the popular side, were wounded and made prisoners; and Napoleon instantly made this a pretext for throwing the weight of his authority into the scale, in favour of the democrats. The French minister peremptorily demanded their instant liberation; and Napoleon sent his aide-de-camp, Lavalette, to the city to compel the enlargement of the prisoners, the disarming of the counter-revolutionists, and the arrest of all the nobles who had instigated any resistance to the innovators. To support these demands, French troops advanced to Tortona, while Admiral Bruéys

with two sail of the line and two frigates, appeared in the bay. The democratic party, encouraged by this powerful protection, now resumed the ascendancy. In vain the senate endeavoured, by half measures, to preserve in part the constitution of their country; they found that the revolutionists were insatiable, and the minister of France demanded his passports, if the whole demands of the Republican general and his adherents in Genoa were not instantly conceded. Terrified by the menaces of the populace, and the threats of their formidable allies, the senators at length yielded to necessity, and nominated a deputation, who were empowered to submit without reserve to the demands of the conqueror. They signed, on the 6th June, a convention at Montebello, which effected a revolution in the government, and put an end to the constitution of Doria. By this deed, the supreme legislative authority was vested in two councils, one of three hundred, the other of one hundred and fifty members, chosen by all the citizens; the executive in a senate of twelve, elected by the councils.¹

This prodigious change immediately excited the usual passions of democracy. The people assembled in menacing crowds, burned the Golden Book, and destroyed the statue of Andrea Doria, the restorer of the freedom of Genoa, and the greatest hero of its history. This outrage to the memory of so illustrious a man, while it proved how ignorant the people were of the glory of their country, and how unfit to be intrusted with its government, greatly displeased Napoleon, who had already begun to feel that hatred at democratic principles, by which he was ever after so remarkably distinguished.² Subsequently, the nobles and priests, finding that they were excluded from all share in the administration of affairs, according to the mode of election which was adopted for carrying the constitution into effect, excited a revolt in the rural districts of the republic. Many parishes refused to adopt the new constitution; the tocsin was sounded in

6th June.

¹ Bott. ii.
290, 305.
Journ. x. 175,
180. Nap.
iv. 164, 166.
Martens, vi.
394.

61.
Violent pas-
sions of the
people.
Rural in-
surrection,
which is
suppressed.

² Nap. iv.
169.

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1797.

6th Sept.

¹ Bott. ii.
305, 320.

Jom. x. 180,
183. Nap.
iv. 169, 170.

the valleys, and ten thousand armed peasants assaulted and carried the line of fortified heights which form the exterior defence of Genoa. General Duphot, however, who commanded the newly organised forces of the infant republic, having assembled three thousand regular troops, attacked and defeated the insurgents; movable columns penetrated into and exacted hostages from the hostile valleys; and the new constitution was put in force in the territory of Genoa, which thenceforward lost even the shadow of independence, and became a mere outwork of the French Republic.¹

62.
Deplorable
humiliation
of Piedmont.
5th April.

Piedmont, during the course of this summer, experienced the bitter humiliations consequent upon the forced alliance in which it was held by the conqueror of Italy. The Directory, from ulterior views as to the revolutionising of these dominions, had refused to ratify the treaty of alliance into which Napoleon had entered with its sovereign; its fortified places were either demolished or in the hands of the French; the feelings of the nobility and the rural population were outraged by the increasing vehemence of the popular party in the towns; and the king, exhausted by humiliation, was already beginning to look to Sardinia as the only refuge for the crown, amidst the troubles by which it was surrounded.²

² Nap. iv.
179, 189.
Bott. ii.
322, 328.

63.
Negotia-
tions be-
tween
France and
England
opened at
Lisle.

The British government made another attempt this summer to open negotiations for peace with the French Directory. Early in July, Lord Malmesbury was sent to Lisle, to renew the attempts at pacification which had failed the year before at Paris; and as the abandonment of the Low Countries by Austria at Leoben, had removed the principal obstacle to an accommodation, sanguine hopes were entertained of success. The moderation of the demands made by England on this occasion was such as to call forth the commendations even of her adversaries. She proposed to surrender all her conquests, reserving only Trinidad from the Spaniards, and the Cape of Good Hope, with Ceylon and its dependencies, from the Dutch.

Such proposals, coming from a power which had been uniformly victorious at sea, and had wrested from its enemies almost all their colonial possessions, were an unequivocal proof of moderation, more especially when, by the separate treaty which Austria had made for herself, Great Britain was relieved from the necessity of demanding any equivalent in her turn for her Continental allies. The French plenipotentiaries insisted that the Republic should be recognised, and the title of King of France renounced by the English monarch—a vain formality which had been retained since it was first assumed by Edward III. These obstacles would probably have been overcome, and the negotiations might have terminated in a general pacification, had it not been for the revolution of the 18th Fructidor (4th September 1797,) to be immediately noticed, and the consequent accession of violence and presumption which it brought to the French government. Immediately after that event, the former plenipotentiaries were recalled, and replaced by Treillard and Bonnier, two furious republicans, who, from the very outset, assumed such a tone that it was evident any accommodation was out of the question. Their first step was to demand from Lord Malmesbury production of authority from the British government to him to surrender all the conquests made by Great Britain during the war, without any equivalent, accompanied by an intimation that, if this was not acceded to within twenty-four hours, he must leave Lisle. This insolent demand, which proved that the new Republican government were as ignorant of the forms of diplomacy as of their situation in the war with England, was received as it deserved: Lord Malmesbury demanded his passports, and returned to this island, “leaving Europe,” says the French historian Jomini, “convinced that, on this occasion at least, the cabinet of St James’s had evinced more moderation than a Directory whose proceedings were worthy of the days of Robespierre.”¹

16th Sept.

¹ Jom. x.
191, 248,
249. Ann.
Reg. 1798,
12, 67. Parl.
Hist. xxxiii.
1003, 1012.
Malmsh.
Desp. iii.
184, 271.

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64.

Progress of
the negotia-
tions at
Udina.

Meanwhile the negotiations for a final treaty at Montebello slowly advanced towards their accomplishment. The cabinet of Vienna, aware of the reaction which was going forward in France, and which was only prevented from overturning the Revolutionary government by the events of the 18th Fructidor, took advantage of every circumstance to protract the conferences, in the hopes of a more moderate party obtaining the ascendant in that country, and more reasonable terms of accommodation being in consequence obtained. But when these hopes were annihilated by the result of that disastrous revolution, the negotiations proceeded with greater rapidity, and the subversion of neighbouring states was commenced without mercy. The French had at first flattered the Venetian commissioners that they should obtain Ferrara, Romagna, and perhaps Ancona, as a compensation for the territories which were taken from the republic; but ultimately they ceded these provinces to the new Cisalpine commonwealth. The republicans of Venice, in despair, endeavoured to effect a junction with that infant state; but this proposal was instantly rejected. It became evident, in the course of the negotiations, that the high contracting parties had laid aside their mutual animosities, and were occupied with no other object but that of arranging their differences at the expense of their neighbours. Exchanges, or rather spoliations, of foreign territories, were proposed without hesitation and accepted without compunction: provinces were offered and demanded, to which the contracting parties had no right: the value of cessions was alone considered, not their legality.¹

¹ Daru, *Hist. de Venise*, v. 428. *Jom.* iv. 248. *Nap.* iv. 248.

65.

The terms
are at length
agreed to.

But though France and Austria had no sort of difficulty in agreeing upon the spoliation of their neighbours, they found it not so easy a matter to arrange the division of their respective acquisitions in the plain of Lombardy. Mantua, justly regarded as the most important place in Italy, was the great subject of dispute; the Republicans contending for it as the frontier of the Cisalpine Republic,

the Imperialists as the bulwark of their Italian possessions. To support their respective pretensions, great preparations were made on both sides. Thirty regiments, and two hundred pieces of cannon, reached the Isonzo from Vienna; while the French added above fifteen thousand men to their armies in Italy. At length Napoleon, irritated by the interminable aspect of the negotiations, declared, that if the ultimatum of the Directory was not signed in twelve hours, he would denounce the truce. The period having expired, he took a vase of porcelain in his hands, which the Austrian ambassador highly valued, as the gift of the Empress Catherine, and said, "The die is then cast, the truce is broken, and war declared: but, mark my words; before the end of autumn, I will break in pieces your monarchy as I now destroy this porcelain;" and with that he dashed it in pieces on the ground. Bowing then to the ministers, he retired, mounted his carriage, and despatched, on the spot, a courier to the Archduke, to announce that the negotiations were broken off, and that he would commence hostilities in twenty-four hours. The Austrian plenipotentiary, thunderstruck, forthwith agreed to the ultimatum of the Directory, and the treaty of CAMPO FORMIO was signed on the following day at five o'clock.¹

17th Oct.
¹ Nap. iv.
264. Daru,
v. 430, 432.

But though Napoleon assumed this arrogant manner to the Austrian ambassadors, he was very far indeed from himself feeling any confidence in the result of hostilities, if actually resumed; and he had, on the contrary, the day before, written to the Directory, that "the enemy had, on the frontiers of Carinthia, ninety thousand infantry and ten thousand horse, besides eighteen thousand Hungarian volunteers, while he had only forty-eight thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry, and that, if they resumed the offensive, everything would become doubtful." "The war," he adds, "which was national and popular when the enemy was on our frontiers, is now foreign to the French people; it has become a war of governments. In the end

66.
Simulated
arrogance
and real
fears of Na-
poleon.

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we should necessarily be overthrown." In truth, his resolution to sign the treaty was accelerated from his having observed, when he looked out from his windows, on the 13th October, the summit of the Alps covered with snow—a symptom which too plainly told him that the season for active operations that year was drawing to a close, and he had no confidence in the ability of France to resume the contest in the following spring. He then shut himself up in his cabinet; and after reviewing his forces, said—"Here are eighty thousand effective men; but I shall not have above sixty thousand in the field. Even if I gain the victory, I shall have twenty thousand killed and wounded; and how, with forty thousand, can I withstand the whole forces of the Austrian monarchy, who will advance to the relief of Vienna? The armies of the Rhine could not arrive at my succour before the middle of November, and, before that time arrives, the Alps will be impassable from snow. It is all over; I will sign the peace! *Venice shall pay the expenses of the war*, and the extension of France to the Rhine; let the government and the lawyers say what they choose."¹

¹ Secret
Despatch,
18th Sept.
and 18th
Oct. Corr.
Conf. iv.
166, 212.
Bour. i. 310.

67.
Napoleon's
secret rea-
sons for
signing this
treaty.

² Cor. Conf.
iv. 229.

³ Cor. Conf.
iv. 233, 234.

But, in addition to these state reasons, Napoleon had other secret motives for agreeing to the spoliation of Venice, and being desirous of coming to an accommodation with the Imperialists. Although Carnot and a majority of the Directory had at first approved of the destruction of that republic, and given it a conditional sanction in the June preceding;² yet, after the revolution of 18th Fructidor, they had come to the resolution of not acquiescing in that disgraceful seizure of an independent state, and had sent their ultimatum to Napoleon, enjoining him not to admit its surrender to the Emperor; and declaring that, rather than have any share in such a perfidious act, they would see their armies driven over the Alps, and all their Italian conquests wrested from the Republic.³ At the same time, they had declared their intention, in the event of hostilities being resumed, of sending commissioners

to relieve Napoleon of his diplomatic cares, and allow him to attend exclusively to his military duties.¹ Napoleon, whose jealousy of the revolutionary government, established at Paris by the revolution of 18th Fructidor, had been much increased by the appointment of Augereau in the room of Hoche to the command of the army on the Rhine, was so much disgusted by these restrictions on his authority, that he wrote to Paris on the 25th September, offering to resign the command.* The Directory, on the 29th September, returned an answer, positively forbidding the cession of Venice to Austria;† upon which, Napoleon, seeing his authority slipping from his hands, and a doubtful campaign about to begin, without hesitation violated his instructions, and signed the treaty fatal to Venice on the 18th October. The whole infamy, therefore, of that proceeding rests on his head; the French Directory is entirely blameless, except in not having had the courage to disown the treaty after his signature was affixed to it.²

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¹ Cor. Conf.
iv. 233.
Hard. iv.
387.² Hard. iv.
529, 536,
890.

By this treaty the Emperor ceded to France Flanders and the line of the Rhine; he agreed to the territory of the republic being extended to the summit of the Maritime Alps; he consented to the establishment of the Cisalpine Republic, comprehending Lombardy, the duchies of

68.

Terms of
the Treaty
of Campo
Formio.

* "It is evident," said he in that letter, "that the government is resolved to act to me as they did to Pichegru. I beseech you, citizen, to appoint a successor to me, and accept my resignation. No power on earth shall make me continue to serve a government which has given me such a *scandalous proof of ingratitude*, which I was far indeed from expecting."³

25th Sept.
³ Confid. Des-
patch, 25th
Sept. iv. 169.

† The resolution of the Directory, after the 18th Fructidor, not to despoil Venice, was repeatedly and strongly expressed. Barras wrote to Napoleon on 8th September:—"Conclude a peace, but let it be an honourable one; let Mantua fall to the Cisalpine Republic, but Venice must *not* go to the Emperor. That is the wish of the Directory, and of all true Republicans, and what the glory of the Republic requires."⁴ Napoleon answered, on the 18th September:—"If your ultimatum is not to cede Venice to the Emperor, I much fear peace will be impracticable; and yet Venice is the city of Italy most worthy of freedom; and hostilities will be resumed in the course of October."⁵ The Directory replied:—"The government now is desirous of tracing out to you with precision its ultimatum. Austria has long desired to swallow up Italy, and to acquire maritime power. It is the interest of France to prevent both these designs. It is evident that, if the Emperor acquires Venice, with its territorial possessions, he will secure an entrance into the whole of Lombardy.

⁴ Barras's
Secret Des-
patch, 8th
Sept.⁵ Secret Des-
patch, 18th
Sept. iv. 161.

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Reggio, Modena, Mirandola, Bologna, Ferrara, Romagno, the Valteline, and the Venetian states as far as the Adige, comprising the territory of Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, and the Polesine. The Ionian Islands, part of the Venetian territory, were given up to France, which acquired besides Mantua, on the frontiers of the Imperial states in Italy, and Mayence, the bulwark of the empire on the Rhine. On the other hand, the Republic ceded to the Emperor, in exchange for the states of Flanders, Istria, Dalmatia, the Venetian isles in the Adriatic, the mouths of the Cattaro, the city of Venice, and its continental possessions as far as the eastern shore of the lake of Garda, the line of the Adige, and that of the Po. By this arrangement, Verona, Peschiera, and Porto-Legnago, fell into the hands of the Austrians, who lost in Flanders and Lombardy provinces, rich, indeed, but distant, inhabited by 3,500,000 souls, and received in the Venetian states a territory of equal riches, with a great seaport, and 3,400,000 souls, lying close to the Hereditary States, besides an acquisition of nearly the same amount which they had made during the war, on the side of Poland. The advantages of the treaty, therefore, how great soever to the conquerors, were, in some degree, also extended to the vanquished.¹

Besides these public, the treaty contained many secret

¹ Jom. ix.
254, 256.
Nap. iv. 265,
266. Daru,
v. 432, 433.
Martens, vi.
420.

We should be treating as if we had been conquered, independent of the disgrace of abandoning Venice, which you describe as worthy of being free. What would posterity say of us should we surrender that great city, with its naval arsenals, to the Emperor? Better a hundred times restore to him Lombardy than pay such a price for it. Let us take the worst view of matters: let us suppose, what your genius and the valour of your army forbid us to fear, that we are conquered and driven out of Italy. In such a case, yielding only to force, our honour at least will be safe; we shall still have remained faithful to the true interests of France, and not incurred the disgrace of a *perfidy without excuse*, as it will induce consequences more disastrous than the most unfavourable results of war. We feel the force of your objection, that you may not be able to resist the forces of the Emperor; but consider that your army would be still less so some months after the peace, so imprudently and shamefully signed. Then would Austria, placed by our own hands in the centre of Italy, indeed take us at a disadvantage. The whole question comes to this: Shall we give up Italy to the Austrians? The French government neither can nor will do so: it would in preference incur all the hazards of war."—See *Corresp. Confid. de Napoléon*, iv. 233, 235.

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1797.

69.

Secret arti-
cles of the
treaty.

articles of nearly equal importance. The most material of these regarded the cession of Salzburg, with its romantic territory, to Austria; the relinquishment of the important town of Wasserburg on the Inn, by Bavaria, to the same power; the free navigation of the Rhine and the Meuse; the abandonment of the Frickthal by Austria to Switzerland, and the providing equivalents to the princes dispossessed on the left bank of the Rhine, on the right of that river. But it was expressly provided that "no acquisition should be proposed *to the advantage of Prussia.*" For the arrangement of these complicated objects, a convention was appointed to meet at Rastadt to settle the affairs of the empire. Finally, it was agreed, "that if either of the contracting powers should make acquisitions in Germany, the other should receive equivalents to the same amount."¹

¹ Jom. x.
254, 255.
Nap. iv. 266,
267. Hard.
iv. 591.

Thus terminated the Italian campaigns of Napoleon—the most memorable of his military career, and which contributed so powerfully to fix his destinies and immortalise his name. The sufferings of Italy in these contests were extreme, and deeply did its people rue the fatal precipitance with which they had thrown themselves into the arms of republican ambition. The enormous sum of 120,000,000 francs, or nearly £5,000,000 sterling, was levied on its territory by the conqueror, in specie, in little more than twelve months—a sum equal to £12,000,000 in Great Britain; and the total amount extracted from the peninsula, in contributions and supplies, during the two years the war lasted, was no less than 400,000,000 francs or £16,000,000 sterling. This immense burden fell almost exclusively on the states to the north of the Tiber, whose republican ardour had been most decided. The Italian territory was partitioned; its independence ruined; its galleries pillaged: the trophies of art had followed the car of Victory;² and the works of immortal genius, which no wealth could

70.
Disastrous
results of
the cam-
paign to the
Italians.

² Jom. Vie
de Nap. i.
256. Nap.
iv. 281.
Hard. v. 11.

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71.

Napoleon's
secret mo-
tives for this
treaty.

purchase, had been torn from their native seats, and violently transplanted to a foreign soil.

Napoleon's conduct in thus violating the instructions of his government to effect the spoliation of the Venetian republic, and betray his democratic allies in that state, would be wholly inexplicable, if evidence did not remain in his secret correspondence of the formation, even at that early period, of those ulterior views by which his conduct through life was mainly regulated. It is remarkable how strongly the mind of Napoleon was already set upon two objects, which formed such memorable features in his future life—the expedition to Egypt, and interminable hostility to Great Britain, “Why,” said he, in his letter to the Directory, of 13th September 1797, “do we not lay hold of Malta? Admiral Bruéys could easily make himself master of it: four hundred knights, and, at the utmost, five hundred men, compose the whole garrison of la Valette. The inhabitants, who amount to one hundred thousand, are already well disposed towards us, for I have confiscated all the possessions of the Order in Italy, and they are dying of famine. With Malta and Corfu, we should soon be masters of the Mediterranean. Should we, on making peace with England, be compelled to give up the Cape of Good Hope, it will be absolutely necessary to take possession of Egypt. That country never belonged to any European power: even the Venetians had there only a precarious authority. We might embark from hence, with twenty-five thousand men, escorted by eight or ten ships of the line, or frigates, and take possession of it. Egypt does not belong to the Grand Seignor.”¹ His inveterate hostility to England was equally early and strongly expressed. In enumerating the reasons which induced him to sign the treaty of Campo Formio, he concludes,—“Finally, we are still at war with England; that enemy is great enough, without adding another. The Austrians are heavy and avaricious; no people on earth are less active or dangerous,

¹ Conf. Letter, Nap. to Direc. 13th Sept. Corr. Conf. iv. 175.

as regards our military affairs, than they are; the English, on the contrary, are generous, intriguing, enterprising. *It is indispensable for our government to destroy the English monarchy, or it will infallibly be overturned by the intrigues and the corruption of these active islanders. The present moment offers to our hands a noble enterprise. Let us concentrate all our activity on the marine, and destroy England; that done, Europe is at our feet.*" In reality, it was his desire to acquire the harbour and naval resources of Venice, for his projected expedition against Egypt and Great Britain, that was one main inducement with Napoleon to treat with such unexampled severity that unhappy republic.¹

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¹ Conf. Letter, Nap. to the Directory, 18th Oct. Corr. Conf. iv. 212.

No words can paint the horror and consternation which the promulgation of this treaty excited in Venice. The democratic leaders, in particular, who had allied themselves with the French, compelled the government to abdicate in order to make way for a republican regime, and received a French garrison within their walls, broke out into the most vehement invectives against their former allies, and discovered, with unavailing anguish, that those who join a foreigner to effect changes in the constitution of their country, hardly ever escape sacrificing its independence. But, whatever may have been the unanimity of feeling which this union of imperial rapacity with republican treachery awakened among the Venetians, it was too late; with their own hands they had taken the serpent into their bosom, and they were doomed to perish from the effects of their own revolutionary frenzy. With speechless sorrow they beheld the French, who occupied Venice, lower the standard of St Mark, demolish the Bucentaur, pillage the arsenal, remove every vestige of independence, and take down the splendid bronze horses, which, for six hundred years, had stood over the portico of the church of St Mark, commemorating the capture of Constantinople by the Venetian crusaders. When the last Doge appeared

^{72.} Consternation in Venice at the publication of that treaty.

16th Jan.

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1797.

before the Austrian commissioner to take the oath of homage to the Emperor, his emotion was such that he fell insensible on the ground—honouring thus, by the extremity of grief, the last act of national independence. Yet even in this catastrophe the fury of party appeared manifest, and a large portion of the people celebrated with transports of joy the victory over the democratic faction, though it was obtained at the expense of the existence of their country.¹

¹ Daru, v.
442, 443.

73.
Great sensation
excited
by this event
in Europe.

The fall of the oldest commonwealth in Europe excited a general feeling of commiseration throughout the civilised world. Many voices were raised, even in the legislative body of France, against this flagrant violation of the law of nations. Independent of the feelings of jealousy, which were naturally awakened by the aggrandisement of two belligerent powers at the expense of a neutral state, it was impossible to contemplate without emotion the overthrow of that illustrious republic, which had contributed in so powerful a manner to the revival of civilisation in Europe. No modern state, from so feeble an origin, had arisen to such eminence; nor, with such limited resources, made so glorious a stand against barbaric invasion. Descended, perhaps alone of all the European states, in a direct and unmixed line from the patricians of ancient Rome, they had rivalled the firmness, of that memorable people. But for their fleets and armies, the standards of Mahomet would have swept over Europe, and Sultaun Bajazet realised his threat of stabling his steeds in the shrine of St Peter's. Their Doges had conquered Constantinople, and seated their generals on the throne of the East; their fleets had wafted the Crusaders to Palestine, and thus arrested in the Holy Land the arms of Saladin. Without inquiring what right either France or Austria had to partition the territories of the commonwealth, men contemplated only its long existence, its illustrious deeds, its constancy in misfortune;² they beheld its annihilation with a mingled

² Daru, v.
436, 437.

feeling of terror and pity; and sympathised with the sufferings of a people who, after fourteen hundred years of independence, were doomed to pass irrevocably under a stranger's yoke.

In contemplating this memorable event, it is difficult to say whether most indignation is felt at the perfidy of France, the cupidity of Austria, the weakness of the Venetian aristocracy, or the insanity of the Venetian people.

For the conduct of Napoleon, no possible apology can be found.* He first excited the revolutionary spirit to

* The French entered the Venetian territory with the declaration—"The French army, to follow the wreck of the Austrian army, must pass over the republic of Venice; but it will never forget that ancient friendship unites the two republics. Religion, government, customs, and property will be respected. The general-in-chief engages the government to make known these sentiments to the people, in order that confidence may cement that friendship which has so long united the two nations."¹ On the 10th March 1797, after the democratic revolt had broken out in Brescia, Napoleon wrote to the Venetian governor of Verona,—"I am truly grieved at the disturbances which have occurred at Verona, but trust that, through the wisdom of your measures, no blood will be shed. The Senate of Venice need be under no sort of disquietude, as they must be thoroughly persuaded of the loyalty and good faith of the French government, and the desire which we have to live in good friendship with your republic."² On the 24th March 1797, he wrote to the Directory, after giving an account of the civil war in the Venetian states,—"M. Pesaro, chief sage of the republic of Venice, has just been here, regarding the events in Brescia and Bergamo, the people of which towns have disarmed the Venetian garrisons, and overturned their authorities. I had need of all my prudence; for it is not when we require the whole assistance of Friuli, and the good-will of the Venetian government, to supply us with provisions in the Alpine desiles, that it is expedient to come to a rupture. I told Pesaro that the Directory would never forget that the republic of Venice was the ancient ally of France, and that our desire was fixed to protect it to the utmost of our power. I only besought him to spare the effusion of blood. We parted the best of friends. He appeared perfectly satisfied with my reception. *The great point in all this affair is to gain time.*"³ On the 5th April, he wrote again to Pesaro,—"The French republic does not pretend to interfere in the internal dissensions of Venice; but the safety of the army requires that I should not overlook any enterprises hostile to its interests."⁴

¹ Parl. Deb. xxxiv. 1338.

² Conf. Cor. ii. 475.

³ Conf. Cor. ii. 549.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 30.

Having thus, to the very last moment, kept up the pretended system of friendship for Venice, Napoleon no sooner found himself relieved by the armistice of Leoben, on the 8th April, from the weight of the Austrian war, than he threw off the mask. On the day after the armistice was signed, he issued a proclamation to the population of the continental possessions of Venice, in which he said,—"The government of Venice offers you no security either for persons or property; and it has, by indifference to your fate, provoked the just indignation of the French government. If the Venetians rule you by the right of

9th April.

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XXIII.

1797.

74.

Infamous
conduct of
Napoleon in
this trans-
action.

such a degree in all the Italian possessions of the republic, at the very time that his troops were fed and clothed by the bounty of its government, that disturbances became unavoidable, and then aided the rebels, and made the efforts of the government to crush the insurrection the pretext for declaring war against the state. He then excited to the uttermost the democratic spirit in the capital, took advantage of it to paralyse the defences and overturn the government of the country; established a new constitution on a highly popular basis, and signed a treaty on the 16th May at Milan, by which, on payment of a

¹ Cor. Conf.
iii. 37.

conquest, I will free you; if by usurpation, I will restore your rights."¹ And having thus roused the whole population of the cities of Venetian *terra firma* to revolt, he next proceeded to hand over all these towns to Austria, by the third clause of the preliminaries of Leoben, which assigned to the Emperor of Austria "*the whole Venetian territory situated between the Mincio, the Po, and the Austrian States.*"²

² Ibid. iii. 559.

Nor did the duplicity of Napoleon end here. On the 16th May, he concluded the treaty with the Venetian republic, already mentioned, the first article of which was—"There shall be henceforth peace and good understanding between France and the Venetian republic."³ The object of Napoleon, in signing this treaty, is unfolded in his Secret Despatch to the Directory three days afterwards,— "You will receive," says he, "herewith the treaty which I have concluded with the republic of Venice, in virtue of which General Baraguay d'Hilliers, with 16,000 men, has taken possession of the city. I have had several objects in view in concluding this treaty. 1. To enter into the town without difficulty, and be in a situation to extract from it whatever we desire, under pretence of executing the secret articles. 2. To be in a situation, if the treaty with the Emperor should not finally be ratified, to apply to our purposes all the resources of the city. 3. To avoid every species of odium in violating the preliminaries relative to the Venetian territory, and, at the same time, to gain pretences which may facilitate their execution. 4. To calm all that may be said in Europe, since it will appear that our occupation of Venice is but a momentary operation, solicited by the Venetians themselves. The Pope is eighty-three, and alarmingly ill. The moment I heard of that, I pushed forward all the Poles in the army to Bologna, from whence I shall advance them to Ancona."⁴ His intentions towards Venice were further summed up in these words, in his despatch to the Directory of 25th May,— "Venice must fall to those to whom we give the Italian continent; but meanwhile, we will take its vessels, strip its arsenals, destroy its bank, and keep Corfu and Ancona."⁵

⁴ Conf. Des.
iii. 169, 19th
May.⁵ Ibid. 25th
May.

Still keeping up the feigned appearance of protection to Venice, Napoleon wrote to the municipality of that town, on the 26th May,— "The treaty concluded at Milan may, in the mean time, be signed by the municipality, and the secret articles by three members. In every circumstance, I shall do what lies in my power to *give you proofs of my desire to consolidate your liberties*, and to see unhappy Italy at length assume the place to which it is entitled in the theatre of the world—free, and independent of all strangers."⁶ Soon after he wrote to General Baraguay d'Hilliers, 13th June,— "You will, upon the receipt of this,

⁶ Conf. Des.
iii. 294.

heavy ransom, he agreed to maintain the independence of Venice under its new and revolutionary government. Having thus committed all his supporters in the state irrevocably in the cause of democratic independence, and got possession of the capital, as that of an allied and friendly power, he plundered it of everything valuable it possessed; and then united with Austria in partitioning the commonwealth, took possession of one half of its territories for France and the Cisalpine Republic; and handed over the other half, with the capital, and its ardent patriots, to the most aristocratic government in Europe.¹

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1797.

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiv.1333.

present yourself to the provisional government of Venice, and represent to them that, in conformity with the principles which now unite the Republic of France to that of Venice, and *the immediate protection which the Republic of France gives to that of Venice*, it is indispensable that the maritime forces of the republic be put on a respectable footing. *Under this pretext you will take possession of everything*—taking care, at the same time, to maintain a good understanding with the Venetians, and to engage in our service all the sailors of the republic, making use constantly of the Venetian name. In short, you must manage so as to transport all the naval stores and vessels in the harbour of Venice to Toulon. By a secret article of the treaty, the Venetians are bound to furnish to the French Republic *three millions' worth of stores* for the marine of Toulon; but my intention is, to take possession, for the French Republic, of *ALL the Venetian vessels, and all the naval stores, for the use of Toulon.*"²

² Conf. D. s.
iii. 305.

These orders were too faithfully executed; and when every article of naval and military stores had been swept away from Venice, Napoleon, without hesitation, assigned away his revolutionary allied republic, which he had engaged to defend, to the aristocratic power of Austria. The history of the world contains no blacker page of perfidy and dissimulation.

It is in vain to allege, that the spoliation of Venice was occasioned, and justified, by her attack on the rear of the French army at Verona. The whole continental possessions of the Republic were assigned to Austria by Napoleon at Leoben, four days *before that event took place*, and when nothing had occurred in the Venetian states but the contests between the aristocratic and democratic factions, which had been stirred up by the secret emissaries of Napoleon himself.

His conduct throughout this transaction appears to have been governed by one principle, and that was, to secure such pretexts for a rupture with Venice, as might afford a decent ground for making its territories the sacrifice which would, at any time, bribe Austria into a peace, and extricate the French army from any peril into which it might have fallen. Twice did the glittering prize answer this purpose: once, when it brought about the armistice of Leoben, and saved Napoleon from the ruin which otherwise might have befallen him; and again at Campo Formio, by relieving him from a war, to which he himself confesses his forces were unequal.

When M. Villefort, the secretary of the French legation at Venice, remonstrated with Napoleon upon the abandonment of that republic, he replied, in words containing, it is to be feared, too faithful a picture of the degradation of

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1797.

75.

Light thus
thrown on
the charac-
ter of Napo-
leon.

These transactions throw as important a light upon the moral as the intellectual character of Napoleon. To find a parallel to the dissimulation and rapacity by which his conduct to Venice was characterised, we must search the annals of Italian treachery; the history of the nations to the north of the Alps, abounding as it does in deeds of atrocity, is stained by no similar act of combined duplicity and violence. This opens a new and hitherto unobserved feature in his character, which is in the highest degree important. The French Republican writers uniformly represent his Italian campaigns as the most pure and glorious period of his history, and portray his character,

modern Italy,—“The French Republic is bound by no treaty to sacrifice its interests and advantages to those of Venice. Never has France adopted the maxim of making war for the sake of other nations. I should like to see the principle of philosophy or morality which should command us to sacrifice forty thousand French, contrary alike to the declared wishes of France and its obvious interests. I know well, that it costs nothing to a handful of declaimers, whom I cannot better characterise than by calling them madmen, to rave about the establishment of republics everywhere. *I wish these gentlemen would make a winter campaign.* Besides, the Venetian nation no longer exists. Divided into as many separate interests as it contains cities, effeminate and corrupted, not less cowardly than hypocritical, the people of Italy, but especially the Venetians, are totally unfit for freedom.”¹

¹ Letter, 26th
Oct. Conf.
Cor. v. 405.

The same idea is expressed in a letter about the same period to Talleyrand, —“You little know the people of Italy: they are not worth the sacrifice of forty thousand Frenchmen. I see by your letters that you are constantly labouring under a delusion. You suppose that liberty can do great things for a base, cowardly, and superstitious people. You wish me to perform miracles; I have not the art of doing so. Since coming into Italy, I have derived little if any support from the love of the Italian people for liberty and equality. I have not in my army a single Italian, excepting fifteen hundred rascals, swept from the streets of its towns, who are good for nothing but pillage. Everything, excepting what you must say in proclamations and public speeches, is here mere romance.”—*Letter to Talleyrand*, Passeriano, 7th Oct. 1797; *Corresp. Confid.* iv. 206.

It only remains to add to this painful narrative of duplicity, that having no further occasion for the services of Landrieux, whom he had employed to stir up the revolt in the Italian cities, and having discovered evidence that he had been in correspondence with the Venetian government, Napoleon himself denounced him to the Directory. Authentic evidence had been discovered of the double part which he acted in that disgraceful transaction, by the French commissioners who examined the Venetian archives; and Napoleon, in consequence, on the 15th November, wrote to the Directory, —“*Landrieux excited the revolt in Brescia and Bergamo, and was paid for it; but, at the same time, he privately informed the Venetian government of what was going on, and was paid by them too. Perhaps you will think it right to make an example of such a rascal; and, at all events, not to employ him again.*”²

² Letter, 15th
Nov. Conf.
Cor. iv. 289.

at first almost perfect, as gradually deteriorated by the ambition and passions consequent on the attainment of supreme power. This was in some respects true; but in others the reverse. Bad in some particulars as it afterwards was, his character never again appears so perfidious as during his earlier years: in fact, it had then attained the *ne plus ultra* of deceit and dissimulation; and, contrary to the usual case, it was in a certain degree improved by the possession of supreme power; and to the last moment of his life, the Emperor was progressively throwing off many of the unworthy qualities by which he was at first stained. Extraordinary as this may appear, abundant evidence of it will be found in the sequel of this work. It was the same with Augustus, whose early life, disgraced by the proscriptions and horrors of the Triumvirate, was almost overlooked in the wisdom and beneficence of his imperial rule. Nor is it difficult to perceive in what principle of our nature the foundation is laid for so singular an inversion of the causes which usually debase the human mind. It is the terrible effect of revolution, as Madame de Stael has well observed, to obliterate altogether the ideas of right and wrong, and instead of the eternal distinctions of morality and religion, to apply in general estimation no other test to public actions but success.¹ It was out of this corrupted atmosphere that the mind of Napoleon, like that of Augustus, at first arose, and it was then tainted by the revolutionary profligacy of the times; but with the possession of supreme power he was called to nobler employments, and often relieved from the necessity of committing iniquity for the sake of advancement. He was brought into contact with men professing and acting on more elevated principles; and, in the discharge of such duties, he cast off, in some instances at least, many of the stains of his early career. This observation is no impeachment of the character of Napoleon; on the contrary, it is its best vindication. His virtues and talents were his own; his vices, in part at least, were the fatal bequest of the Revolution.

¹ Rév.
Franç. ii.
264.

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1797.

76.
Conduct of
Austria.

The conduct of Austria, if less perfidious, was not less a violation of every principle of public right. Venice, though long wavering and irresolute, was at length committed in open hostilities with the French Republic. She had secretly nourished the Imperial as well as the Republican forces; she had given no cause of offence to the Allied powers; she had been dragged, late indeed and unwillingly, but irrevocably, into a contest with the Republican forces; and if she had committed any fault, it was in favour of the cause in which Austria was engaged. Generosity in such circumstances would have prompted a noble power to lend the weight of its influence in favour of its unfortunate neighbour: justice forbade that it should do anything to aggravate its fate. But to share in its spoliation, to seize upon its capital, and extinguish its existence, is an act of rapacity for which no apology can be offered, and which must for ever form a foul stain on the Austrian annals.¹

¹ Proclamation of the Senate of Venice, 12th April 1798.

77.
Weakness of the Venetian aristocracy.

Nor can the aristocracy of Venice be absolved from their full share of the blame consequent on the destruction of their country. It was clearly pointed out to them, and they might have known, that the contest in which Europe was engaged with France, was one of such a kind as to admit of no neutrality or compromise; that those who were not with the democratic party were against them; that their exclusive and ancient aristocracy was, in an especial manner, the object of Republican jealousy; and that, if they were fortunate enough to escape destruction at the hands of the French armies, they certainly could not hope to avoid it from their own revolutionary subjects. Often, during the course of the struggle, they held the balance of power in their hands, and might have interposed with decisive effect on behalf of the cause which was ultimately to be their own. Had they put their armies on a war footing, and joined the Austrians when the scales of war hung even at Castiglione, Arcola, or Rivoli, they might have rolled back the tide of revolution-

ary conquest, and secured to themselves and their country an honoured and independent existence. They did not do so; they pursued that timid policy which is ever the most perilous in presence of danger; they shrunk from a contest which honour and duty alike required, and were, in consequence, assailed by the revolutionary tempest when they had no longer the power to resist it, and doomed to destruction, amidst the maledictions of their countrymen, and the contempt of their enemies. "Too blind," as has been finely said, "to avert danger, too cowardly to withstand it, the most ancient government of Europe made not a moment's resistance: the peasants of Unterwalden died upon their mountains, the nobles of Venice clung only to their lives."¹

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1797.

Last in the catalogue of political delinquency, the popular party are answerable for the indulgence of that insane and unpatriotic spirit of faction which never fails, in the end, to bring ruin upon those who indulge it. Following the phantom of democratic ambition; forgetting all the ties of kindred and country in the pursuit of popular exaltation, they leagued with the stranger against their native land, and paralysed the state in the moment of its utmost peril, by the fatal passions which they introduced into its bosom. With their own hands they tore down the venerable ensign of St Mark; with their own arms they ferried the invaders across the Lagunæ, which no enemy had passed for fourteen hundred years;* with their own arms they subjugated the senate of their country, and compelled, in the last extremity, a perilous and disgraceful submission to the enemy. They received, in consequence, the natural and appropriate reward of such conduct—the contempt of their enemies, the hatred of

78.
Insanity of
the demo-
cratic party.

* The last occasion on which the Place of St Mark had seen the Transalpine soldiers, was when the French crusaders knelt to the Venetian people to implore succour from that opulent republic, in the last crusade against the infidels in the Holy Land. The unanimous shout of approbation in the assembled multitude—"It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" led to that cordial union of these two powers which overturned the throne of Constantinople.—"Maximus," says Bacon, "innovator tempus."—See GIBBON, chap. lx.

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1797.

79.
Striking
contrast ex-
hibited at
the same
period by
the nobility
and people
of Great
Britain.

their friends, the robbery of their trophies, the partition of their territory, the extinction of their liberties, and the annihilation of their country.

What a contrast to this timid and vacillating conduct in the rulers, and these flagitious passions in the people of Venice, does the firmness of the British government, and the spirit of the British people, afford at this juncture! They, too, were counselled to temporise in danger, and yield to the tempter; they, too, were shaken in credit and paralysed by revolt; they, too, were assailed by democratic ambition, and urged to conciliate and yield as the only means of salvation. The Venetian aristocracy did what the British aristocracy were urged to do. They cautiously abstained from hostilities with the revolutionary power; they did nothing to coerce the spirit of disaffection in their own dominions; they yielded at length to the demands of the populace, and admitted, in the moment of danger, a sudden and portentous change in the internal structure of the constitution. Had the British government done the same, they might have expected similar results to those which took place in Venice—expected to see the revolutionary spirit acquire irresistible force, the means of national resistance become prostrated by the divisions of those who should wield them, and the state fall an easy prey to the ambition of those neighbouring powers who had fomented its passions to profit by its weakness. From the glorious result of the firmness of the one, and the miserable consequences of the pusillanimity of the other, a memorable lesson may be learned both by rulers and nations. Thence they may see that courage in danger is often the most prudent as well as the most honourable course; that periods of foreign peril are never those in which considerable changes in internal institutions can with safety be adopted; and that, whatever may be the defects of government, those are the worst enemies of their country who league with foreign nations for their redress.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INTERNAL GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE, FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIRECTORY TO THE REVOLUTION OF 18TH FRUCTIDOR.

THE different eras of the Revolution, which have hitherto been traced, show the progress of the principles of democracy through their natural stages of public transport, moneyed insecurity, financial embarrassment, arbitrary confiscation, general distress, plebeian insurrection, sanguinary oppression, civil warfare, and military despotism. It remains to examine its progress during the receding tide—to trace the declining and enfeebled efforts of Republican fervour during the years when its desolating effects had become generally known, and the public strength refused to lend its aid to the ambition and the delusion of individuals. At this period it is evident that the chief desire of the human mind is for repose. The contentions, the miseries of former years rise up in fearful remembrance to all classes of citizens. The chimera of equality can no longer seduce—the illusion of power no longer mislead; and men, bitterly suffering under the consequences of former error, eagerly range themselves under any government which promises to save them from “the worst of tyrannies, the tyranny of a multitude of tyrants.”¹

To effect the maximum of freedom with the minimum of democratic ascendancy, is the great problem of civil government, as the chief object of war is to attain the

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XXIV.

1795.

1.
Retrospect
of the previ-
ous changes
of the Revolu-
tion.

¹ Aristotle.

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2.

The maximum of freedom with the minimum of democracy, the great object of government.

greatest possible national security at the smallest expenditure of human life. Republican passion is frequently necessary to sustain the conflicts of freedom, in the same manner as the military spirit is often indispensable to purchase national independence, and always essential to its security. But it is not a less evil in itself, if not kept under due restraint, than the savage passion for the destruction of the species. When too vehemently excited, it generally becomes an evil incomparably more serious than the political grievances which awakened its fury. Great national objects sometimes cannot be achieved without the excitation of this passion, because it is desire, and not reason, which ever governs the masses of mankind; but when it becomes the ruling power, the last extremities of suffering are at hand. Like all other passions, however, whether in the individual or society, it cannot be indulged to excess, without inducing evils which speedily terminate its ascendancy, and punish the delinquencies to which it has given rise. The democratic passion is to nations what the desire of licentious freedom is to the individual: it bears the same relation to the principle of genuine liberty, that the chastened attachment of marriage, which "peoples heaven," does to the wild excesses of lust, which find inmates for hell. The fleeting enjoyments of guilt are speedily lost in its lasting pains; the extravagance of democratic ambition, if it obtains unresisted sway, invariably terminates, before the expiry of a few years, in universal suffering.

3.

Provision of nature against the evil of democratic anarchy.

Nature never intended that the great body of mankind should be immediately concerned in government, because their intellects and information are unequal to, and their situation inconsistent with, the task. Useful and necessary as a check upon the government of others, they bring about the greatest calamities when they become the governors themselves: respectable, virtuous, and salutary when employed in their proper sphere, they become dangerous, impassioned, and irrational, when called to the

exercise of duties which do not belong to them. The restraint of holding property, and constantly suffering themselves from any shocks it may receive, is the only security against the undue abuse of power. As the great body of the people cannot possess this advantage, and consequently political power cannot be exercised by them without injury, first to others, and at last to themselves, nature has wisely provided for the speedy and effectual extinction of the passion for it, in the necessary consequence of the effects which it produces. The insecurity, privations, and suffering which follow in its train, unavoidably lead, before the lapse of a very long period, to military despotism. Some democratic states, as Milan, Florence, and Sienna, to terminate their dissensions, have voluntarily submitted to the yoke of a military leader; others have fallen under his dominion at the close of a sanguinary period of domestic strife. All have, in one way or other, expelled the deadly venom from the system, and, to escape the horrors of anarchy, have shielded themselves under the lasting government of the sword.

The illusions of republicanism were now dispelled in France. Men had passed through so many vicissitudes, and lived so long in a few years, that all their pristine ideas were overturned. The rule of the middle class, and of the multitude, had successively passed like a rapid and bloody phantasmagoria. The age was far removed from that of France of the 14th July 1789, with its enthusiastic feelings, its high resolves, its ardent aspirations, its popular magistrates, and its buoyant population. It was still further removed from that of France of the 10th August, when a single class, and that the most licentious, had usurped the whole authority of the state, and borne to the seat of government its vulgar manners and sanguinary ideas—its distrust of all above, and its severity to all beneath itself. Society emerged, weakened and disjointed, from the chaos of revolution; and, in despair of effecting any real amelioration in the social system, all classes rushed

4.
State of the
public mind
and manners
in France in
the begin-
ning of 1796.

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1795.

with unbounded vehemence into the enjoyments of private life. The elegances of opulence, long suspended, were resumed with unprecedented alacrity; balls, festivities, and theatres, were frequented with more avidity than in the most corrupted era of the monarchy; it seemed as if the nation, long famished, was quenching its thirst in the enjoyments of existence. Compassion for suffering was generally felt: those who had recently escaped death themselves had their hearts open to the woes of humanity. Experience now proved the truth of the poet's lamentation, that the most secure foundation for pity of the sufferings of others is the experience of suffering ourselves.* Public affairs wore an air of tranquillity which singularly contrasted with the disasters of former years: the emigrants returned in crowds, with a confidence which afterwards proved fatal to them. All women were in transports at the auspicious change. Horror at the Jacobins restored the sway of the rich; the recollection of the clubs secured the influence of the saloons; female charms resumed their ascendancy with the return of pacific ideas; and the passion for enjoyment, freed from the dread of death and the restraints of religion, was indulged without control. Manners were never more corrupted than under the rule of the Directory—luxury never more prodigal—passion never more unrestrained. Society resumed its wonted order, not by repentance for crime, but by a change of its direction. This is the natural termination of popular effervescence.¹ The transition is easy from the extravagance of democracy to the corruptions of sensuality, from the fanaticism of the Puritans to the gallantries of Charles II., because these

i Deux

Amis, xiv.
30, 36. Mig-
net, ii. 401.
Th. viii. 67,
75. D'Abr.
ii. 86, 94,
158, 164.

* "E legge di natura,
Che a compatir ci mova
Chi prova una sventura,
Che noi provammo ancor:
O sia che amore in noi,
La somiglianza accenda;
O sia che più s'intenda
Nel suo l'altrui dolor."

METASTASIO, *Guiseppa*, parte 1.

opposite extremes alike proceed from the indulgence of individual passion. Such transition is extremely difficult from either to the love of genuine freedom, because that implies a sacrifice of both to patriotic feeling. The age of Nero soon succeeded the strife of Gracchus ; but ages revolved, and a different race of mankind was established, before that of Fabricius was restored.

The deputies were regarded with the utmost solicitude by all parties upon the completion of the elections. The third part, who had been recently chosen, according to the provision of the constitution, represented with tolerable fidelity the opinions and wishes of the party which had now become influential in France. They consisted not of those extraordinary and intrepid men who shine in the outset of the revolutionary tempest, but of those more moderate characters who, in politics equally as the fine arts, succeed to the vehemence of early passion ; who take warning by past error, and are disposed only to turn the existing state of things to the best account for their individual advantage. But their influence was inconsiderable, compared with that of the two-thirds who remained from the old Assembly, and who, both from their habits of business and acquired celebrity, retained the principal direction of public affairs. The whole deputies having assembled, according to the directions of the constitution, chose by ballot two hundred and fifty of their number, all above forty, and married, to form the Council of the Ancients. They afterwards proceeded to the important task of appointing the Directors ; and after some hesitation, the choice fell on Barras, Rewbell, La Révellière-Lépaux, Letourneur, and Sièyes. Upon the last declining the proffered honour, Carnot was chosen in his stead. These five individuals immediately proceeded to the exercise of their new sovereignty.¹

Though placed at the head of so great a state, the directors were at first surrounded with difficulties. When they took possession of their apartments in the Luxem-

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5.
First proceedings of
the legislature.
Choice of
the Directory.

¹Th. viii. 76,
78. Mig. ii.
400.

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XXIV.

1795.

6.

Extreme
penury of
the govern-
ment.¹ Bailleul,
ii. 275, 281.
Examen de
M^{ad}. de
Stael, sur la
Rév. Franç.
Mign. i. 404.

7.

Barras—his
character;
and that of
Rewbell,
La Rével-
lière-Lé-
paux, and
Letourneur.

bourg, they found scarcely any furniture in the rooms; a single table, an inkstand and paper, and four straw chairs, constituted the whole establishment of those who were about to enter on the management of the greatest Republic in existence. The incredible embarrassment of the finances, the critical state of the armies, the increasing discontents of the people, did not deter them from undertaking the discharge of their perilous duties. They resolved unanimously that they would make head against all the difficulties in which the state was involved, or perish in the attempt.¹

Barras was the one of the Directory who was most qualified by his character and previous services to take the lead in the government. Naturally indolent, haughty, and voluptuous; accessible to corruption, profligate, and extravagant; ill qualified for the fatigues and the exertion of ordinary business, he was yet possessed of the firmness, decision, and audacity which fitted him to be a leader of importance in perilous emergencies. His lofty stature, commanding air, and insinuating manners, were calculated to impose upon the vulgar, often ready to be governed in civil dissensions as much by personal qualities as by mental superiority; while the eminent services which he had rendered to the Thermidorian party on the fall of Robespierre, and his distinguished conduct and decisive success on the revolt of the Sections, gave him considerable influence with more rational politicians. Rewbell, an Alsatian by birth, and a lawyer by profession, was destitute of either firmness or eloquence; but he owed his elevation to his habits of business, his knowledge of forms, and the pertinacity with which he represented the feelings of the multitude, often in the close of revolutionary convulsions envious of distinguished ability. La Révellière-Lépaux, a sincere republican, who had joined the Girondists on the day of their fall, and preserved, under the proscription of the Jacobins, the same principles which he had embraced during their ascendancy, was

blessed by nature with a mild and gentle disposition, which fitted him to be the ornament of private society. But he was weak and irresolute in public conduct, totally destitute of the qualities requisite in a statesman, strongly tinged with the irreligious fanaticism of the age, and perpetually dreaming of establishing the authority of natural religion on the ruins of the Christian faith. Letourneur, an old officer of artillery, had latterly supplied the place of Carnot in the Committee of Public Salvation, but without possessing his abilities; and when Carnot came in the room of Sièyes, he received the department of the marine and the colonies.¹

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¹ Mign. ii.
404, 405,
417. Nap.
in Las Cas.
iv. 143, 145.
Lac. xiii. 4,
5. Th. viii.
78, 79.

The first object of the Directory was to calm the passions, the fury of which had so long desolated France. This, however, was no easy task—the more especially as, with the exception of Carnot and Barras, there was not one of them either a man of genius or of any considerable reputation. Such was the cruel effect of a revolution which in a few years had cut off whole generations of ability, and swept away all, save in the military career, that could either command respect or insure success. Their principles were republican, and they had all voted for the death of the King in the Convention, and consequently their elevation gave great joy to the democratic party, who had conceived considerable disquietude from the recent formidable insurrection and the still menacing language of the Royalists. The leaders of that party, defeated, but not humbled, had great influence in the metropolis; and their followers seemed rather proud of the perils they had incurred, than subdued by the defeat they had sustained. Within and without, the Directors were surrounded by difficulties. The Revolution had left everything in the most miserable situation: the treasury was empty; the people were starving; the armies destitute; the generals discouraged. The progress of the public disorders had induced that extreme abuse in the multiplication of paper money, which seems the engine employed by nature, in

8.
First mea-
sures of the
Directory,
and extreme
difficulties
of their
situation.

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1795.

revolutionary disorders, to bring salutary suffering home to every individual, even of the humblest rank in society, as the opposite set of evils, arising from the undue contraction of the currency, produces that destruction alike of industry and realised wealth which warns mankind of the dangers of the rule of a moneyed oligarchy. The revenue had almost ceased to be collected, and the public necessities were provided for merely by a daily issue of paper, which every morning was sent forth from the public treasury still damp from the manufactory of the preceding night. Its value was fixed by law, but it would not pass for a hundredth, sometimes a thousandth part of that amount. The sales of all kinds of commodities had ceased, from the effect of the law of the maximum and forced contributions; and the subsistence of Paris and the other great towns was secured merely by compulsory requisitions, for which the unfortunate peasants received only assignats, worth not a hundredth part of the value at which they were compelled to accept them. Finally, the armies, destitute of everything, and unfortunate at the close of the campaign, were discontented and dejected. The brilliant successes by which Napoleon restored the military affairs of the Republic, had not yet shed their lustre over the affairs of the new government.* Amidst these difficulties, they were successively assailed by the different factions whose strife had brought the country to this miserable condition; and they owed their victory over both, only to the public torpor which recent experience of the sufferings all had endured had produced.¹

¹ Mig. ii. 402,
410. Th.
viii. 84, 85.

One of their first acts was a deed of humanity—the liberation of the daughter of Louis XVI. from the melancholy prison where she had been confined since her parents' death. This illustrious princess, interesting alike for her unparalleled misfortunes, and the resignation with which she had borne them, after having discharged, as long as the barbarity of her persecutors would permit, every filial

* Chaps. xx. and xxiii.

and sisterly duty—after having seen her father, her mother, her aunt, and her brother, successively torn from her arms, to be consigned to destruction—had been detained in solitary confinement since the fall of Robespierre, and was still ignorant of the fate of those she had so tenderly loved. The Directory, yielding at length to the feelings of humanity, and a sense of the difficulty which would be experienced in assigning a suitable station in a republic to a princess of such exalted birth, agreed to exchange her for the deputies who had been delivered up by Dumourier to the Imperialists. Accordingly, on the 19th December 1795, this last of the royal captives left the prison where she had been detained since the 10th August 1792, and proceeded by rapid journeys to Bâle, where she was exchanged for the Republican commissioners, and received by the Austrians with the honour due to her rank. Her subsequent restoration, and second banishment, will form an interesting episode in the concluding part of this work.¹*

The earliest measure of the Directory for the relief of the finances, was to obtain a decree authorising the cessation of the distribution of rations to the people, which were thenceforward to be continued only to the most necessitous classes. This great measure, the first symptom of emancipation from the tyranny of the mob of the metropolis, was boldly adopted; and though the discontents to which it gave rise appeared in the conspiracy of Babœuf, which shortly after broke forth, it was successfully carried into effect. All, except those who lived on the public bounty, felt that the system could no longer be maintained, and concurred in supporting its abolition. The state of monetary affairs next occupied their anxious attention. After various ineffectual attempts to return to a metallic circulation, the government found itself obliged to continue the issue of assignats. The quantity in circulation at length rose, in January 1796, to forty-

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1795.

9.

Liberation
of the
Duchesse
d'Angou-
lême, who
is exchanged
for the De-
puties de-
livered up
by Dumour-
rier.

19th Dec.
1795.

¹ Th. viii.
126. Lac.
xii. 383.

10.

Cessation of
the distribu-
tion of food,
and terri-
torial man-
dates.

* Infra, Chap. xcii.

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1795.

five milliards, or £1,800,000,000 sterling, and the depreciation became so excessive, that a milliard, or a thousand millions of francs, produced only a million in metallic currency : in other words, the paper money had fallen to a *thousandth* part of its nominal value. To stop this enormous evil, the government adopted the plan of issuing a new kind of paper money, to be called *territorial mandates*, which were intended to retire the assignats at the rate of thirty for one. This was in truth creating a new kind of assignats, with an inferior denomination, and was meant to conceal from the public the enormous depreciation which the first had undergone. It was immediately acted upon ; mandates were declared the currency of the Republic, and became by law a legal tender ; the national domains were forthwith exposed to sale, and assigned over to the holder of a mandate without any other formality than a simple *procès verbal*. At the same time the most violent measures were adopted to give this new paper a forced circulation. All payments by and to the government were ordered to be made in it alone ; severe penalties were enacted against selling the mandate for less than its nominal value in gold or silver, and to prevent all speculations on their value, the public exchange was closed.¹

¹ Th. viii.
162, 185,
188, 189.
Mig. ii. 406,
407. Hist.
Parl. xxxvii.
247.

11.
Their transient success.

The only advantage possessed by the mandates over the old assignats was, that they entitled the holder to a more summary and effectual process for getting his paper exchanged for land. As soon as this became generally understood, it procured for them an ephemeral degree of public favour ; a mandate for 100 francs rose, soon after it was issued, from fifteen to eighty francs, and their success procured for government a momentary resource. But this relief was of short duration. Two milliards four hundred millions of mandates (£100,000,000) were issued, secured over an extent of land supposed to be of the same value ; but before many months had elapsed, they began to decline, and were soon nearly at as great a

discount, in proportion to their value, as the old assignats. By no possible measure of finance could paper money, worth nothing in foreign states from a distrust of its security, and redundant at home from its excessive issue, be maintained at anything like an equality with gold and silver. The mandates were, in truth, a reduction of assignats to a thirtieth part of their value; but to be on a par with the precious metals, they should have been issued at one thousandth part, being the rate of discount to which the original paper had now fallen.¹

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¹ Th. viii.
33, 191, 335.
Mig. ii. 407.
Lac. xiii. 40.

Government, therefore, and all the persons who received payment from it, including the public creditors, the army, and the civil servants, were still suffering the most severe privation; but the crisis had passed with the great bulk of individuals in the state. Most of the unhappy original holders had become bankrupt, had been guillotined, or were in exile. Their distresses, how great soever, had passed away, like those of a deceased generation. The fall in the value of the assignats had been so excessive, that no one would take either them or their successors in exchange. Barter, and the actual interchange of one commodity for another, had come to supply the place of sale; and all those possessed of any fortune, realised it in the form of the luxuries of life, which were likely to procure a ready sale in the market. The most opulent houses were converted into vast magazines for the storing of silks, velvets, and luxuries of every description, which were retailed sometimes at a profit, and sometimes at a loss, and by which the higher classes were enabled to maintain their families. From the general prevalence of this rude interchange, internal trade and manufactures regained, to a certain degree, their former activity; and though the former opulent quarters were deserted, the Boulevards and Chaussée-d'Antin began to exhibit that splendour for which they afterwards became so celebrated under the empire. As the victories of the Republic increased, and gold and silver were obtained from the

12.
And ultimate fall.
Recourse had in despair to barter.

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1796.

¹ Th. viii.
337. Lac.
xiii. 33, 36.

conquest of Flanders, Italy, and the German states, the government paper entirely ceased to be a medium of exchange; transfers of every description were effected by barter or sales for the precious metals, and the territorial mandates where nowhere to be seen but in the hands of speculators, who bought them for a twentieth part of their nominal value, and sold them at a small advance to the purchasers of the national domains.¹

13.
Starvation
of the fund-
holders and
all the pub-
lic function-
aries.

But while all classes were thus emerging from this terrible financial crisis, the servants of government, and the public creditors, still paid in mandates at par, were literally dying of famine. Employment from government, instead of being solicited, was universally shunned; persons in every kind of service sent in their resignations; and the soldiers deserted from the armies in as great crowds as they had flocked to them during the Reign of Terror. While the armies of Pichegru and Napoleon, who received their allowances in the coin they extracted from the conquered states, were living in luxurious affluence, those on the soil of the Republic, and paid in its depreciated paper, were starving. But most of all, the public creditors, the *rentiers*, were overwhelmed by unprecedented distress. The opulent capitalists who had fanned the first triumphs of the Revolution, the annuitants who had swelled the multitude of its votaries, were now crushed under its wheels. Then was seen the unutterable bitterness of private distress, which inevitably follows such a convulsion. The prospect of famine produced many more suicides among that unhappy class, than all the horrors of the Reign of Terror. Poverty to those unused to it has more terrors than death itself. Many, driven to extremities, had recourse, late in life, to daily labour for their subsistence; others, unable to endure its fatigues, subsisted upon the charity which they obtained from the more fortunate survivors of the Revolution.² Under the shadow of night they were to be seen crowding round the doors of the opera and other

² Th. viii.
337, 338.
Mig. ii. 402.
Lac. xiii. 40.

places of public amusement, of which they had formerly been the principal supporters, and in a disguised voice, or with an averted head, imploring charity from crowds, among whom they were fearful of discovering a former acquaintance or dependant.

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1796.

The situation of the armies in the interior was not less deplorable. Officers and soldiers, alike unable to procure anything for their pay, were maintained only by the forced requisitions which, under the pressure of necessity, were still continued in the departments. The detachments dispersed, and deserted on the road; even the hospitals were shut up, and the unhappy soldiers who filled them turned adrift upon the world, from utter inability to procure for them either medicines or provisions. The gendarmerie, or mounted police, disbanded: the soldiers who composed that force, unable to maintain their horses, sold them, and left the service; and the high-roads, infested by numerous brigands, the natural result of the disorganisation of society, became the theatre of unheard-of atrocities. Strangers profited by the general distress of France to carry on commerce with its suffering inhabitants, which contributed in a considerable degree to restore the precious metals to circulation. The Germans, the Swiss, the Russians, and the English, seized the moment when the assignats were lowest, to fall with all the power of metallic riches upon the scattered but splendid movables of France. Wines of the most costly description were bought up by speculators, and sold cheaper at Hamburg than Paris; diamonds and precious stones, concealed during the Reign of Terror, were brought forth from their places of concealment, and procured for their ruined possessors a transitory relief. Pictures, statues, and furniture of every description, were eagerly purchased for the Russian and English palaces, and by their general dispersion effected a change in the taste for the fine arts over all Europe. A band of speculators, called *la Bande Noire*, bought up an

14.
Deplorable
state of the
armies from
the same
cause.
Great spec-
ulations of
foreigners.

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1796.

† Lac. xiii.
37. Th. viii.
338.

15.
Open abandon-
ment of
the paper
system.
16th July.

July 18.
* Mig. viii.
339. Th.
viii. 346,
347.

16.
Prodigious
transfer-
ence of for-
tunes which
it had oc-
casioned.

immense number of public and private edifices, which were sold for almost nothing, and reimbursed themselves by selling a part of the materials; and numerous families, whose estates had escaped confiscation, retired to the country, and inhabited the buildings formerly tenanted by their servants, where they lived in seclusion and rustic plenty on the produce of a portion of their estates.¹

The excessive fall of the paper at length made all classes perceive that it was in vain to pursue the chimera of upholding its value. On the 16th July 1796, the measure, amounting to the open confession of a bankruptcy which had long existed, was adopted. It was declared that all persons were to be at liberty to transact business in the money which they chose; that the mandates should be taken at their current value, which should be published every day at the Treasury; and that the taxes should be received either in coin or mandates at that rate, with the exception of the departments bordering on the seat of war, in which it should still be received in kind. The publication of the fall of the mandates rendered it indispensable to make some change as to the purchase of the national domains; for where the mandate had fallen from one hundred francs to five francs, it was impossible that the holder could be allowed to obtain in exchange for it land worth one hundred francs in 1790, and still, notwithstanding the fall of its value, from the insecure tenure of all possessions, deemed worth thirty-five francs. It was in consequence determined, on the 18th July, that the unassigned national domains should be sold for mandates at their current value.²

Such was the end of the system of a paper circulation bearing a forced value, six years after it had been originally commenced, and after it had effected a greater change in the fortunes of individuals, than had perhaps ever been accomplished in the same time by any measure of government. It did more to overthrow the existing wealth, to transfer movable fortunes from one hand to

another, than even the confiscation of the emigrant and church estates. All debts were in fact annihilated by the elusory form in which it permitted payment to be made. In its later stages, a debtor with one franc in specie could force a discharge of a debt of two hundred, sometimes even of a thousand; the public creditors, the government servants, in fact all the classes who formerly were opulent, were reduced to the last stage of misery. On the other hand, the debtors throughout the whole country found themselves liberated from their engagements; the national domains were purchased almost for nothing by the holders of government paper; and the land, infinitely subdivided, required little of the expenditure of capital, and became daily more productive from the number and energy of its new cultivators. These vast alterations in the circulation, induced social changes more durable in their influence, and far more important in their final results, than all the political catastrophes of the Revolution; for they entirely altered, and that too in a lasting manner, the distribution of property, and made a permanent alteration in the form of government unavoidable from a total change in the class possessed of substantial power.¹

Deprived of the extraordinary resource of issuing paper, the Directory were compelled to calculate their real revenue, and endeavour to accommodate their expenditure to that standard. They had estimated the revenue for 1796 at 1,100,000,000 francs, or £44,000,000, including an arrear of 300,000,000 francs, or £12,000,000 of the forced loans, which had never yet been recovered. But the event soon showed that this calculation was fallacious; the revenue proved much less, and the expenditure much greater than had been expected. The land-tax produced only 200 millions, instead of 250; the 200 millions expected from the sale of the remainder of the national domains was not half realised, and all the other sources of revenue failed in similar proportion.

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XXIV.

1796.

¹ Th. viii.
343. Lac.
xiii. 88.17.
Public
bankruptcy
finally de-
clared.
And two-
thirds of the
national
debt con-
fiscated.

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1796.

Aug. 18.

¹ Th. ix.
177, 319,
326, and
viii. 343.
Bris. Hist.
Fin. ii. 321,
327. Lac.
xiv. 105.
Hist. Parl.
de France,
xxxvii. 321,
327.

Meanwhile, the armies of the Rhine, of the Sambre and Meuse, and of the interior, were in the most extreme state of penury, and all the national establishments on the point of ruin. In these circumstances, it was no longer possible to avoid a bankruptcy. The public creditors, as usual in all such extremities, were the first to be sacrificed. After exhausting every expedient of delay and procrastination with the *rentiers*, the Directory at length paid them only a fourth in money, and three-fourths in bills, dischargeable on the national domains, called *Bons des Trois Quarts*. The annual charge of the debt was 248 millions of francs, or nearly £10,000,000 sterling; so that, by this expedient, the burden was in effect reduced to 62 millions, or £2,500,000. The bills received for the three-fourths were from the first at a ruinous discount, and soon became altogether unsaleable; and the disorders and partiality consequent on this mode of payment ere long became so excessive that it could no longer be continued. The income of 1797 was estimated at 616,000,000 francs, or nearly £25,000,000, but the expenditure could not be reduced to this without taking a decisive step in regard to the debt. It was therefore finally resolved to continue a payment of a third only of the debt in specie; and the remaining two-thirds were to be discharged by the payment of a capital in bills, secured on the national domains, at the rate of twenty years' purchase. These bills, like the *Bons des Trois Quarts*, immediately fell to a sixth of their value, and shortly after dwindled away to almost nothing, from the quantity simultaneously thrown into the market. As the great majority of the public creditors were in such circumstances that they could not take land, this was, to all intents, a national bankruptcy, which cut off at one blow two-thirds of their property.¹

These attempts of the Directory, though long unsuccessful, to restore order to the distracted chaos of revolutionary France, were seconded by the efforts of the great

majority of the people, to whom a termination of political contests had become the most imperious of necessities. Such, in truth, is the disposition in human affairs to right themselves, when the fever of passion has subsided, that men fall insensibly into order, under any government which promises to save them from the desolating effect of their own passions. Within a few months after the establishment of the new government, the most frightful evils entailed on France by the revolutionary regime, had been removed or alleviated. The odious law of the maximum, which compelled the industry of the country to pay tribute to the idleness of towns, was abolished: the commerce of grain in the interior was free: the assignats were replaced, without any convulsion, by a metallic currency: the press had resumed its independence; the elections had taken place without violence; the guillotine no longer shed the noblest blood in France: the roads were secure; the ancient proprietors lived in peace beside the purchasers of the national domains. Whatever faults they may have afterwards committed, France owes to the Directory, during the first year, the immense obligation of having begun the reconstruction of society out of the fusion it had undergone in the revolutionary crucible.¹

In one particular alone the Directory made no approach towards improvement. Religion still remained prostrated as it had been by the strokes of the Decemvirs: the churches were closed; Sunday was abolished: baptism and communion were unknown; the priests in exile, or in hiding under the roofs of the faithful remnant of the Christian flock. The youth of both sexes were brought up without the slightest knowledge of the faith of their fathers; a generation was ushered into the world, destitute of the first elements of religious instruction. Subsequently, the immense importance of this deficiency appeared in the clearest manner; it has left a chasm in the social institutions of France, which all the genius of

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1797.

18.

Successful
efforts of
the Direc-
tory to re-
store order
in France.¹ De Stael,
ii. 162.
Mign. ii.
406.19.
But irreligi-
on con-
tinues still
triumphant.
The Theo-
philanthro-
pists.

Napoleon, and all the glories of the empire, have not been able to repair; and which, it is to be feared, is destined to prevent the growth of anything like rational or steady freedom in that distracted country. In vain La Révellière-Lépaux endeavoured to establish a system of *Theophilanthropy*, and opened temples, published chants, and promulgated a species of liturgy. All these endeavours to supersede the doctrines of revelation speedily failed; and Deism remained the religion of the few of the revolutionary party who bestowed any thought on religious concerns. The tenets and ideas of this singular sect were one of the most curious results of the Revolution. Their principles were, for the most part, contained in the following paragraph:—"We believe in the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul. Worship the Deity; cherish your equals; render yourself useful to your country. Everything is good which tends to preserve and bring to perfection the human race; everything which has an opposite tendency is the reverse. Children, honour your fathers and mothers; obey them with affection, support their declining years. Fathers and mothers, instruct your children. Women, behold in your husbands the heads of your houses; husbands, behold in women the mothers of your children, and reciprocally study each other's happiness." When men flatter themselves that they are laying the foundations of a new religion, they are, in truth, only dressing up, in a somewhat varied form, the morality of the Gospel.¹*

Napoleon viewed these enthusiasts, some of whom were

* The worship of this sect was very singular. La Révellière-Lépaux was their high-priest; they had four temples in Paris, and on appointed days service was performed. In the middle of the congregation, an immense basket, filled with the most beautiful flowers of the season, was placed as the symbol of the creation. The high-priest pronounced a discourse, enforcing the moral virtues, "in which," says the Duchess of Abrantes, "there was frequently so much truth and feeling, that, if the Evangelists had not said the same thing much better 1800 years before them, one might have been tempted to embrace their opinions." This sect, like all others founded upon mere Deism and the inculcation of the moral virtues, was short-lived, and never included any considerable body of the people.²

¹ Mign. ii. 406. Lac. xiii. 2. Lavalette, i. 323, 324.

² D'Abr. vi. 37, 38.

still to be found in Paris when he seized the helm of affairs in 1799, in their true light. "They are good actors," said he.—"What!" answered one of the most enthusiastic of their number, "is it in such terms that you stigmatise those whose chiefs are among the most virtuous men in Paris, and whose tenets inculcate only universal benevolence and the moral virtues?"—"What do you mean by that?" replied the First Consul; "all systems of morality are fine. Apart from certain dogmas, more or less absurd, which were necessary to suit the capacity of the people to whom they were addressed, what do you see in the Veda, the Koran, the Old Testament, or Confucius? Everywhere pure morality—that is to say, a system inculcating protection to the weak, respect to the laws, gratitude to God. The Gospel alone has exhibited a complete assemblage of the principles of morality, divested of absurdity. That is what is truly admirable, and not a few commonplace sentences put into bad verse. Do you wish to see what is truly sublime? Repeat the Lord's prayer. You and your friends would willingly become martyrs; I shall do them no such honour. No strokes but those of ridicule shall fall upon them; and, if I know anything of the French, they will speedily prove effectual!" Napoleon's views soon proved correct. The sect lingered on five years; and two of its members had even the courage to publish short works in its defence, which speedily died a natural death. Their number gradually declined; and they were at length so inconsiderable that, when a decree of government, on the 4th October 1801, prohibited them from meeting in the four churches which they had hitherto occupied as their temples, they were unable to raise money enough to hire a room to carry on their worship. The extinction of this sect was not owing merely to the irreligious spirit of the French metropolis; it would have undergone the same fate in any other age or country. It is not by flowers and verses, declamations on the beauty of spring and the goodness of the Deity,¹ that a permanent

CHAP.
XXIV.

1797.

20.
Napoleon's
views on this
subject.

¹ D'Abr. vi.
38, 41.

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1797.

21.
Renewed
efforts of the
Jacobins.

impression is to be made on a being exposed to the temptations, liable to the misfortunes, and filled with the desires, incident to the human race. Those are the allies of religion ; but not religion itself.

The shock of parties, however, had been too violent, the wounds inflicted too profound, for society to relapse, without further convulsions, into a state of repose. It was from the Jacobins that the first efforts proceeded ; and the principles of their leaders at this juncture are singularly instructive as to the extremities to which the doctrines of democracy are necessarily pushed, when they take a deep hold of the body of the people. This terrible faction had never ceased to mourn in secret the ninth Thermidor as the commencement of their bondage. They still hoped to establish absolute equality, notwithstanding the variety of human character—universal virtue, despite the general tendency to vice—and complete democracy, without regard to the institutions of modern civilisation. They had been driven from the government by the fall of Robespierre, and deprived of all influence in the metropolis by the defeat and disarming of the faubourgs. But the necessities of government, on occasion of the revolt of the sections on the thirteenth Vendémiaire, had compelled it to invoke the aid of their desperate bands to resist the efforts of the Royalists, and the character of the Directors inspired them with hopes of regaining their influence in the direction of affairs. Flattered by these prospects, the broken faction reassembled. They instituted a new club, which held its meetings in a vast subterranean vault under the Pantheon. This club, they trusted, would rival the far-famed assemblage of the Jacobins ; and they there instituted a species of idolatrous worship of Marat and Robespierre, whom they still upheld as objects of veneration and imitation to their followers.¹

¹ Lac. xiii.
13. Mign.
ii. 411.

The principles of this remarkable party were in great part those which Rousseau developed in his *Contrat Social*, and which were at the bottom of all the miseries

and convulsions of the French Revolution. They are thus given in the words of the able historian of their party, himself deeply implicated in the conspiracy. "Democracy is the public system in which equality and good morals put the people in a situation to exercise with advantage legislative power. Among the men who have appeared with most lustre in the revolutionary arena, there are some who, from the very beginning, pronounced themselves boldly in favour of the real emancipation of the French people. Marat, Robespierre, and St-Just figured gloriously, with some others, in the honourable list of the defenders of equality. Marat and Robespierre boldly attacked the anti-popular system which prevailed in the Constituent Assembly, directed before and after the 10th August the proceedings of the patriots, struggled in the Convention against the hatred and calumnies of the selfish party which prevailed there, elevated themselves in the condemnation of the King to the highest flights of philosophy, and bore the principal parts in the great events of the 31st of May, and the following days, of which the false friends of equality at last destroyed the happy effects. The principles of this party were, that the chief rights of man consist in the preservation of his existence and of his liberty, and belong equally to all ; that property is that portion of the public good which law permits him to retain ; that sovereignty resides in the people, and all public functionaries are their servants ; that law is the free and solemn expression of the people's will ; that resistance to oppression is the inevitable result of the rights of man ; that every institution which is not founded on the principle that *the people are good, and the magistrate is corruptible*, is erroneous ; and that kings, aristocrats, and tyrants, whoever they are, are slaves who have revolted against the sovereign of the earth, which is the human race, and against the legislature of the universe, which is nature."¹

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XXIV.

1796.

22.
Principles
of the new
conspirators.

¹ Buona-
rotti, Con-
spiration de
Babeuf, i.
23, 33.

These principles the new conspirators had borrowed

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XXIV.

1796.

23.

Babœuf—
his extreme
revolutionary
principles.

from Robespierre and the extreme popular party since the beginning of the Revolution. But they now contended for a new and more important element, from the want of which, in their opinion, all the former effects of the Revolution had failed. This element was, the equal division of property. The head of this party was Babœuf, surnamed Gracchus, who aspired to become chief of the fanatical band. He published a Journal, entitled the Tribune of the People, which advocated the principles of his sect with much ability, and that earnestness of manner which is so important an element in popular eloquence. His leading principle was, that the friends of freedom had hitherto failed, because they had not ventured to make that use of their power which could alone insure its lasting success. "Robespierre fell," said he, "because he did not venture to pronounce the word—'Agrarian Law.' He effected the spoliation of a few rich, but without benefiting the poor. The *sans-culottes*, guided by too timid leaders, piqued themselves on their foolish determination to abstain from enriching themselves at others' expense. Real aristocracy consists in the possession of riches, and it matters not whether they are in the hands of a Villeroy, a Laborde, a Danton, a Barras, or a Rewbell. Under different names, it is ever the same aristocracy which oppresses the poor, and keeps them perpetually in the condition of the Spartan helots. The people are excluded from the chief share in the property of France; nevertheless, the people, who constitute the whole strength of the state, should be alone invested with it, and that too in equal shares. There is no real equality without an equality of riches. All the great of former times should, in their turn, be reduced to the condition of helots; without that, the Revolution is stopped where it should begin. These are the principles which Lycurgus or Gracchus would have applied to Revolutionary or Republican France; and, without their adoption, the benefits of the Revolution are a mere chimera."¹

¹ Lac. xiii.
14. Buonarrotti, i. 33,
40.

These doctrines of Babœuf, which were nothing more than the maxims of the Revolution pushed to their legitimate consequences, instead of being stopped short when they had served the purpose of a particular party, show how correctly Mr Burke had, long before, characterised the real Jacobin principles. "Jacobinism," says he, "is the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against its property. When private men form themselves into associations for the purpose of destroying the laws and institutions of their country ; when they secure to themselves an army, by dividing among the people of no property the estates of the ancient and lawful proprietors ; when the state recognises those acts ; when it does not make confiscation for crimes, but crimes for confiscations ; when it has its principal strength, and all its resources, in such a violation of property ; when it stands chiefly upon such violation, massacring, by judgments or otherwise, those who make any struggle for their own legal government, and their old legal possessions—I call this Jacobinism by establishment."¹ Such were the professed objects of the Revolutionists ; their real designs have been thus eloquently characterised by Sir James Mackintosh : "These men, Republicans from servility, who published the social panegyric on massacre, and who reduced plunder to a system of ethics, are as ready to preach slavery as anarchy. But the more daring ruffians cannot so easily bow their heads under the yoke. These fierce spirits have not lost

"The unconquerable will,
The study of revenge, immortal hate."

They pursue their old end of tyranny under their old pretext of liberty. The recollection of their unbounded power renders every inferior condition irksome and vapid ; and their former atrocities form a sort of moral destiny which impels them to the commission of new crimes. They have no place left for penitence on earth : they labour under the most awful proscription of opinion ever

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1796.

24.

Mr Burke's
early appreciation of
this tendency of the
Jacobins.

¹ Thoughts
on a Regi-
cide Peace,
97.

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XXIV.

1796.

¹ Mack-
intosh's
Works, iii.
265.25.
Progress of
the insur-
rection.

pronounced against human beings; they have cut down every bridge by which they could retreat into the society of men. Tyrannical power is their only refuge from the just vengeance of their fellow creatures. Murder is their only means of usurping power. They have no taste, no occupation, no pursuit, but power and massacre. They have drunk too deep of human blood ever to relinquish their cannibal appetite."¹

As the great object of the conspirators was a total overthrow of property, and a division of it in equal, or nearly equal proportions, among the whole people, it was necessary to proceed with extreme caution, both in divulging their intentions to the public, and in preparing the means of enforcing them by an armed force. The nucleus of the conspiracy was formed in the prisons of Paris, particularly those of Plessis and the Four Nations, during the period after the fall of Robespierre, when a large number of the most ardent democrats were confined together. The greater part of these were by degrees liberated by the government which succeeded the ninth Thermidor, and under the auspices of Babœuf, Darthé, Buonarotti, and others, a new society, composed of the most extreme Jacobins, was formed, who met in a great vault under the Pantheon, where, by the light of flambeaus, and seated on the humid ground, they ruminated on the most likely method of regenerating France. The machinery which they set in motion for this purpose was very extensive, and soon had its ramifications in every department of the country, and in a small part of the army. A chief revolutionary agent, with several subordinate assistants, was established in each of the twelve divisions of Paris, who soon extended their correspondents into most of the departments of the Republic. A secret directory of public safety was also established, consisting of d'Antonnelle, Babœuf, Bedon, Buonarotti, Darthé, Filipe, Rexellet, and Silvain-Maréchal. Being well aware, however, that, in order to secure the co-operation of the

people, it was necessary to present to them not only the ultimate prospect of social regeneration, but some immediate practical benefits which might incite them to insurrection, they framed a solemn instrument, styled an "Insurrectional Act," the publication of which was to be the signal of the new revolution. In this proclamation it was declared that the whole effects of the emigrants, of the conspirators against public freedom, and of the enemies of the people, should be forthwith divided among the poor and the defenders of the cause of freedom; that the working-classes should be immediately lodged in the houses of the conspirators against freedom, and clothed in their dresses; that the whole effects pledged by the people with the pawnbrokers should instantly be restored to them; and that the nation should adopt the wives, children, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters of those who had been slain in support of their cause in the insurrection, and maintain them at the public expense. In addition to this, it was proposed that it should be declared by the sovereign people, that all the property of France was at their disposal, and that the future division of it should be made entirely at their pleasure. Finally, in order to strike terror into the tyrants, it was proposed that the Directory and the principal members of the government should, instead of being publicly executed, be crushed under the ruins of their palaces, the remains of which were to be left in wild confusion, like a mighty cairn, to mark the spot where tyranny had been finally overthrown in France.¹

¹ Acte Insurrection.
Buonarrotti,
Pièce. Just.
ii. and i.
153, 155,
157.

There was a time when plausible doctrines such as these, so well calculated to excite the passions of the squalid multitude in large cities, would in all probability have produced a great effect on the Parisian populace. But time extinguishes passion, and unmasks illusions, to a generation as well as an individual. The people were no longer to be deceived by these high-sounding expressions; they knew, by dear-bought experience, that the equality

26.
But they
fail now in
rousing the
people.

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XXIV.

1796.

27th Feb.

¹ Th. viii.
179. Mign.
ii. 411. Lac.
xiii. 15.

of democracy is only an equality of subjection, and the equal division of property only a pretence for enriching the popular rulers. The lowest of the populace alone, accordingly, were moved by these efforts of the Jacobins; the middle classes, who were likely to suffer by them, steadily resisted them; and the Directory, finding their government firmly established in the opinion of the better classes, closed the Club at the Pantheon, and seized several numbers of Babœuf's Journal, containing passages tending to overthrow the constitution. To avert the further encroachments of the Jacobin party, they endeavoured to introduce a restriction on the liberty of the press; but the two Councils, after a solemn discussion, refused to sanction any such proposal.¹

27.
Renewed
efforts of the
Democrats,
and plans
of the con-
spirators.

Defeated in this attempt, the democratic chiefs assembled in a place called the *Temple of Reason*, where they sang revolutionary songs, deploring the death of Robespierre and the slavery of the people. They had some communication with the troops in the camp at Grenelle, and admitted to their secret meetings a captain in that force, named Grizel, whom they considered one of their most important adherents. Their design was now to establish at once what they called the "Public Good," and for that end to divide property of every description, and put at the head of affairs a government consisting of "true, pure, and absolute democrats." It was unanimously agreed to murder the Directors, disperse the Councils, and put to death the leading members, and erect the sovereignty of the people; but to whom to intrust the supreme authority of the executive, after this was achieved, was a matter of anxious and difficult deliberation. At length they selected sixty-eight persons who were esteemed the most determined and absolute democrats, in whom the powers of the state were to be invested until the complete democratic regime was established. The day for commencing the insurrection was fixed, and all the means of carrying it into effect were arranged. It was to take place

on the 21st May. Placards and banners were prepared, bearing the words, "Liberty, Equality, Constitution of 1793, Common Good;" and others having the inscription, "Those who usurp the sovereignty of the people should be put to death by freemen." The conspirators were to march from different quarters to attack the Directors and the Councils, and make themselves masters of the Luxembourg, the treasury, the telegraph, and the arsenal of artillery at Meudon; a correspondence had been opened with the Jacobins in other quarters, that the revolt might break out simultaneously in all parts of France. To induce the lower classes to take part in the proceedings, proclamations were immediately to be issued, requiring every citizen of any property to lodge and maintain a man who had joined in the insurrection; and the bakers, butchers, and wine-merchants were to be obliged to furnish the articles in which they dealt to the citizens, at a low price fixed by the government. All soldiers who should join the people were to receive instantly a large sum in money, and their discharge; or, if they preferred remaining by their colours, they were to get the houses of the Royalists to pillage.¹

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XXIV.

1796.

21st May.

¹ Th. viii.
193, 196.
Mign. ii.
412, 413.
Buonarrotti,
i. 196, 208.

The principles of this remarkable sect, however, did not stop short at these steps, immediately calculated to awaken the cupidity and win the support of the working-classes. They went a great deal further, and had matured their plans for the ultimate remodelling of the whole social institutions of France, on a footing of the most complete republican equality. They contemplated the erection of a community similar to that of Lycurgus, but without its kings, its Ephori, or its helots. They proposed to abolish private property of every description, both landed and movable; an entire community of goods and labour being their grand remedy for all social evils, which had wholly sprung, in their estimation, from the concentration of these advantages in the hands of a few. As a consequence of this, labour was to be universal and

28.
Ultimate
views of the
conspirators.

CHAP.
XXIV.

1796.

compulsory. Every man was to belong to some trade, and bring the produce of his toil to its common fund. Parental and domestic education was to be abolished; every child of either sex was to be considered as belonging to the state, and educated for the public behoof, at great public seminaries. The young of different sexes were not to meet till married, except at great festivals on stated occasions, when patriotic hymns were to be sung, and the choice of partners was to be made. Every facility was proposed for divorce, the indissolubility of marriage being considered, next to private property, the most prolific source of evil. The national defence was to be intrusted to all the young men indiscriminately, till they arrived at a certain age, and all of them were to be armed and marched to the camps on the frontiers; the legislative functions were to be exercised by the same individuals, in primary assemblies, when they returned to their places of abode after their period of service was over. The aged, infirm, and orphans, were to be gratuitously maintained at the public expense. There was to be no capital or central government, no magistrates or teachers, save those appointed by the people. Disease, it was said, under such a system, would be rare, law unknown, theology unheard of; luxury, idleness, and oppression, would disappear; the country would be covered with a succession of villages, the land become a continuous garden; and all the privations consequent on the loss of luxury to a few would be more than compensated by the diminution of labour, and increase of comfort to all.¹

¹ Buona-
rotti, i. 208,
316.

29.
The conspi-
racy is dis-
covered, and
Babœuf
arrested.

These extreme measures, the natural result of a long-continued revolutionary strife, are nearly akin to the dreams of Plato for a perfect republic, and, amidst all their extravagance, they savoured of something grand and generous. The immediate incitements which the democratic leaders held out, however—universal plunder and division of property—were addressed to the basest passions, though they indicated a perfect knowledge of human

nature, and the means by which the masses are to be most effectually stimulated. They might, at an earlier period, have roused the most vehement democratic passions. But coming, as they did, at a time when such opinions inspired all men of any property with horror, they failed in producing any considerable effect. The designs of the conspirators were divulged to government by Grizel; and, on the 20th May, the day before the plot was to have been carried into execution, Babœuf, and all the leaders of the enterprise, were seized, some at their own houses, others at their place of assembly, and with them documents which indicated the extent of the conspiracy. Babœuf, though in captivity, abated nothing of his haughty bearing, and would only condescend to negotiate with the government on a footing of perfect equality. "Do you consider it beneath you," said he to the Directory, "to treat with me as an independent power? You see of what a vast party I am the centre: you see that it nearly balances your own; you see what immense ramifications it contains. I am well assured that the discovery must have made you tremble. It is nothing to have arrested the chiefs of the conspiracy; it will revive in other bosoms if theirs are extinct. Abandon the idea of shedding blood in vain; you have not hitherto made much noise about the affair; make no more; treat with the patriots; they recollect that you were once sincere Republicans; they will pardon you, if you concur with them in measures calculated to effect the salvation of the Republic." Instead of acceding to this extravagant proposal, the Directory published the letter, and ordered the trial of the conspirators before the High Court of Vendôme. This act of vigour contributed more than anything they had yet done to consolidate the authority of government.¹

¹ Th. viii.
197, 198.
Mign. ii.
413.

The partisans of Babœuf, however, were not discouraged. Some months afterwards, and before the trial of the chiefs had come on, they marched in the night, to the number

CHAP.
XXIV.

1796.

30.

His partisans break
out at
Grenelle,
but are
defeated.
20th Aug.

of six or seven hundred, armed with sabres and pistols, to the camp at Grenelle. They were received by a regiment of dragoons, which, instead of fraternising with them as they expected, charged and dispersed the motley array. Great numbers were cut down in the fight. Of the prisoners taken, thirty-one were condemned and executed by a military commission, and thirty transported. This severe blow extinguished, for a long period, the hopes of the Jacobin party, by cutting off all their leaders of resolution and ability; and though that party still inspired terror, by the recollection of its former excesses, it ceased from this time forward to have any real power to disturb the tranquillity of the state. Despotism is never so secure as immediately after the miseries of anarchy have been experienced. The Directory followed up this success by the trial of Babœuf, Amar, Vadier, Darthé, and the other leaders taken on the 20th May, before the Court of Vendôme. Their behaviour on this occasion was that of men who neither feared death nor were ashamed of the cause in which they were to die. At the commencement and conclusion of each day's proceedings they sang the Mar-seillaise hymn; their wives attended them to the court, and encouraged them, by their constancy, to suffer bravely in the cause of freedom.¹

29th Aug.
¹ Buonarrotti, ii. 41, 57. Th. ix. 35, and viii. 349.

31.
Babœuf's
address to
the jury.

"Examine your own heart," said Babœuf in addressing the jury; "you will find the secret voice which tells you these men aimed only at the happiness of their fellow-creatures. The Revolution was to them no matter of personal interest. Rest assured, citizens, those are men who regard it as an event interesting to humanity: believe me, it had become to them a true religion, to which they were ready to sacrifice their comfort, their repose, their property, their life. To strike a friend of liberty is to lend a helping-hand to kings. You are sitting in judgment on liberty: it has been fertile in martyrs, and the avengers of their memory. Liberty expires when the generous passions are extinguished; when to the men whom it has

inflamed are presented the bloody heads of those who have devoted themselves to its worship. It is in vain to say that, were our arguments well founded, our intentions pure, they could be carried into execution only by overturning the constitution. If so strange a proposition is admitted, there is in France neither an institution of jury nor a country. It is not on the conspiring to overturn existing authority, but legitimate authority, that the attention of the jury is to be fixed; for how can they find him guilty who, albeit conspiring against actual authority, does so alone in favour of the only real authority, the will of the people? To what, then, comes the Supreme Law of the Interest of the People, if the depositaries of its power are to reckon as naught the love of country in the hearts of the accused?" Babœuf and Darthé, at the conclusion of this address, turned towards their wives, and said, "that they should follow them to Mount Calvary, because they had no reason to blush for the cause for which they suffered." They were all acquitted except Babœuf and Darthé, who were condemned to death, and seven others, who were sentenced to transportation. The two first, on hearing the sentence, mutually stabbed each other with a poniard; but the wounds did not prove fatal, and they were led out next day, bleeding as they were, to the place of execution, where they died with the stoicism of the old Romans.¹

¹ Mign. ii.
414, 415.
Th. ix. 25,
and viii. 349.
Buon. ii. 58,
59, 61.

The terror excited by these repeated efforts of the Jacobins was extreme, and totally disproportioned to the real danger with which they were attended. It is the remembrance of the danger which is past, not the prospect of that which is future, that ever affects the generality of mankind. This feeling encouraged the Royalists to make an effort to regain their ascendancy, in the hope that the troops in the camp at Grenelle, who had so firmly resisted the seductions of the democratic, might be more inclined to aid the exertions of the monarchical party. Their conspiracy, however, destitute of any aid in the legislative

32.
Abortive
attempts of
the royal-
ists.

CHAP.
XXIV.

1796.

¹ Mign. ii.
416. Th.
ix. 28.

33.
Singular
manners at
this period
in France.

bodies, though numerous supported by the population of Paris, proved abortive. Its leaders were Brottier, an old counsellor of the parliament, Laville-Heurnois, and Dunan. They made advances to Malo, the captain of dragoons who had resisted the seductions of the Jacobins; but he was equally inaccessible to the offers of the Royalists, and delivered up their leaders to the Directory. They were handed over to the civil tribunal, which, being unwilling to renew the reign of blood, humanely suffered them to escape with a short imprisonment.¹

The manners of 1795 and 1796 were different from any which had yet prevailed in France, and exhibited a singular specimen of the love of order and the spirit of elegance regaining their ascendant over a nation which had lost its nobility, its religion, and its morals. The total destruction of fortunes of every description during the Revolution, and the complete ruin of paper money, reduced every one to the necessity of doing something for himself, and restored commerce to its pristine form of barter. The saloons of fashion were converted into magazines of stuffs, where ladies of the highest rank engaged, during the day, in the drudgery of trade, to maintain their families or relations, while in the evening the reign of pleasure and amusement was resumed. In the midst of the wreck of ancient opulence, modern wealth began to display its luxury; the faubourg St-Antoine, the seat of manufactures, the faubourg St-Germain, the abode of rank, remained deserted; but in the quarter of the Chaussée-d'Antin, and in the Boulevard Italien, the riches of the bankers, and of those who had made fortunes in the Revolution, began to shine with unprecedented lustre. Splendid hotels, sumptuously furnished in the Grecian style, which had now become the fashion, were embellished by magnificent fêtes, where all that was left of elegance in France by the Revolution assembled to indulge the newly revived passion for enjoyment. The dresses of the women were carried to extravagance, in the

Grecian style; and the excessive nudity which they exhibited, while it proved fatal to many persons of youth and beauty, contributed, by the novel aspect of the charms which were presented to the public eye, to increase the general enchantment. The assemblies of Barras, in particular, were remarkable for their magnificence; but, in the general confusion of ranks and characters which they presented, they afforded too clear an indication of the universal destruction of the ancient landmarks, in morals as well as society, which the Revolution had effected.¹

CHAP:
XXIV.

1796.

¹ Th. viii.
180. Lac.
xiii. 34, 35.
D'Abr. ii.
44, 64.

In these assemblies were to be seen the elements out of which the Imperial court was afterwards formed. The young officers, who had risen to eminence in the Republican armies, began here to break through the rigid circle of aristocratic etiquette; and the mixture of characters and ideas which the Revolution had produced rendered the style of conversation incomparably more varied and animating than anything which had been known under the ancient regime. In a few years the world had lived through centuries of knowledge. There was to be seen Hoche, not yet twenty-seven years of age, who had recently extinguished the war in la Vendée, and whose handsome figure, brilliant talents, and rising glory, rendered him the idol of women even of aristocratic habits; while the thoughtful air, energetic conversation, and eagle eye of Napoleon, already, to persons of discernment, foretold no ordinary destinies. The beauty of Madame Tallien was still in its zenith; while the grace of Madame Beauharnais, and the genius of Madame de Stael, threw a lustre over the reviving society of the capital, which had been unknown since the fall of the monarchy. The illustrious men of the age, for the most part, at this period selected their partners for life from the brilliant circle by which they were surrounded; and never did such destinies depend on the decision or caprice of the moment. Madame Permon, a lady of rank and singular attractions, from Corsica, in whose family Napoleon had from infancy

34.
Young
generals
and others
who appear-
ed in the
salons of
Paris.

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XXIV.

1796.

¹ D'Abr. ii.
44, 48. Th.
viii. 181,
182.

been intimate, and whose daughter afterwards became Duchess of Abrantes, refused, in one morning, the hand of Napoleon for herself, that of his brother Joseph for her daughter, and that of his sister Pauline for her son. She little thought that she was declining for herself the throne of Charlemagne; for her daughter that of Charles V.; and for her son the most beautiful princess in Europe.¹

35.
But the re-
sult of the
elections
is prepar-
ing a catas-
trophe from
the success
of the roy-
alists.

But the passions roused had been too violent to subside without further convulsions; and France was again destined to undergo the horrors of Jacobin rule, before she settled down under the despotism of the sword. The Directory was essentially democratic; but the first elections having taken place during the excitement produced by the suppression of the revolt of the sections at Paris, and two-thirds of the councils being composed of the members of the old Convention, the legislature was, in that respect, in harmony with the executive. The elections of the year 1797, however, when one-third of both were changed, produced a total alteration in the balance of parties in the state. These elections, for the most part, turned out favourable to the royalist interest—a reaction inevitable immediately after the miseries of democratic rule have been experienced. So far did the members of that party carry hostility to the Jacobins, that they questioned all the candidates in many of the provinces as to whether they were holders of the national domains, or had ever been engaged in the Revolution, or in any of the public journals, and instantly rejected all who answered affirmatively to any of these questions. The reaction against the Revolution was soon extremely powerful over the whole departments. The royalists, perceiving, from the turn of the elections, that they would acquire a majority, soon gained the energy of victory. The multitude, ever ready to follow the victorious party, ranged themselves on their side; while a hundred journals thundered forth their declamations against the government, without its venturing to invoke the aid of the sanguinary law,

which affixed the punishment of death against all offences tending towards a restoration of royalty. The avowed corruption, profligacy, and unmeasured ambition of Barras and the majority of the Directory, strongly contributed to increase the reaction throughout the country. The result of the election was such, that a great majority in both councils was in the royalist or anti-conventional interest; and the strength of the republican party lay solely in the Directory and the army.¹

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XXIV.
1796.

¹ Mign. 421,
422. Lac.
xiv. 16.
Nap. iv. 216.
Th. ix. 36.
D'Abr. i.
120.

The first act of the new Assembly, or rather of the Assembly with its new third of members, was to choose a successor to the director Letourneur, upon whom the lot had fallen of retiring from the government. The choice fell on Barthélemy, the minister who had concluded the peace with Prussia and Spain—a respectable man, of royalist principles. Pichegru, who had been elected deputy of the department of the Jura, was, amidst loud acclamations, appointed president of the Council of Five Hundred: Barbé-Marbois, also a royalist, president of the Council of the Ancients. Almost all the ministry were changed, and the Directory was openly divided into two parties: the majority consisting of Rewbell, Barras, and La Révellière; the minority of Barthélemy and Carnot. The latter, though a steady republican, was inclined to join the royalist party from his love of freedom, and his rooted aversion to violent measures. Steadily pursuing what he conceived to be the public good, he had, during the crisis of the Reign of Terror, supported the dictatorial authority; and now, when the danger to freedom from foreign subjugation was over, he strove to restore the monarchical party. The opposite factions soon became so exasperated that they mutually aimed at supplanting each other by means of a revolution; a neutral party, headed by Thibaudeau, strove to prevent matters coming to extremities, but, as usual in such circumstances, was unsuccessful, and shared in the ruin of the vanquished.²

^{36.}
Barthélemy
is chosen a
Director in
lieu of Le-
tourneur,
and joins
Carnot.

² Mign. ii.
425. Nap.
iv. 216, 217,
218. Th. ix.
165, 166.

The chief strength of the royalist party lay in the club

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37.
Club of
Clichy, and
Club of
Salm. Gen-
eral reac-
tion in fa-
vour of the
royalists.

of Clichy, which acquired as preponderating an influence at this epoch, as that of the Jacobins had done at an earlier stage of the Revolution. Few among its members were in direct communication with the royalists, but they were all animated with hatred at the Jacobins, and an anxious desire to prevent their regaining their ascendancy in the government. The opposite side assembled at the Club of Salm, where was arrayed the strength of the republicans, the Directory, and the army. The reaction in favour of royalist principles, at this juncture, had become so strong that, out of seventy periodical journals which appeared at Paris, only three or four supported the cause of the Revolution. Lacretelle, the future historian of the Revolution, the Abbé Morellet, the author of one of its most interesting memoirs, Laharpe, the celebrated critic, Sicard, the unwearied philanthropist, and all the literary men of the capital, wrote periodically on the royalist side. Michaud, destined to illustrate and beautify the history of the Crusades, went so far as to publish a direct *éloge* on the princes of the exiled family—an offence which, by the subsisting laws, was punishable with death. He was indicted for the offence; but acquitted by the jury, amidst the general applause of the people. The majority of the Councils supported the liberty of the press, from which their party was reaping such advantages, and, pursuing a cautious but incessant attack upon government, brought them into obloquy by continually exposing the confusion of the finances, which were becoming inextricable, and dwelling on the continuance of the war, which appeared interminable.¹

¹ Mign. ii.
422. Lac.
xiv. 16, 18.

38.

The royal-
ists now
supported
the liberty
of the press.

At this epoch, by a singular but not unusual train of events, the partisans of royalty were the strongest supporters of the liberty of the press, while the Jacobin government did everything in their power to stifle its voice. This is the natural course of things when parties have changed places, and the executive authority is in the hands of the popular leaders. Freedom of discussion is the

obvious resource of liberty, whether menaced by regal, republican, or military violence; it is the insurrection of thought against physical force. It may frequently mislead and blind the people, and for years perpetuate the most fatal delusions; but still it is the great assistant of freedom, and it alone can restore the light of truth to the generation it has misled. The press is not to be feared in any country where the balance of power is properly maintained, and opposing parties divide the state, because their opposite interests and passions call forth contradictory statements and arguments, which at length extricate truth from their collision. The period of danger from its abuse commences when it is in great part turned to one side, either by despotic power, democratic violence, or purely republican institutions. France under Napoleon was an example of the first; Great Britain, during the Reform fever in 1831, of the second; America is at present of the third. Wherever one power in the state is overbearing, whether it be that of a sovereign, an oligarchy, or of the multitude, the press becomes the instrument of the most debasing tyranny.¹

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¹ Mad. de
Stael, ii. 183,
263.

To ward off the attacks daily made upon them, the Directory proposed a law for restricting the liberty of the press, and substituting graduated penalties for the odious punishments which the subsisting law authorised, but which could not be carried into effect from its severity. It passed the Five Hundred, but was thrown out in the Ancients, amidst transports of joy in the royalist party. Encouraged by this success, they attempted to undo the worst parts of the revolutionary fabric. The punishment of imprisonment or transportation, to which the clergy were liable by the revolutionary laws, was done away, and a proposal made to permit the open use of the ancient worship, allow the use of bells in the churches, the cross on the graves of such as chose to place that emblem there, and relieve the priests from the necessity of taking the republican oaths. On this occasion Camille-Jourdan,

89.
Measures of
the Direc-
tory to avert
the danger.
Camille-
Jourdan's
speech in
favour of
religion.

28th June.

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XXIV.

1797.

4th July.

deputy from Lyons, whose religious and royalist principles had been strongly confirmed by the atrocities of the Jacobins in that unfortunate city, made an eloquent and powerful speech, which produced a great sensation. He pleaded strongly the great cause of religious toleration, and exposed the iniquity of those laws which, professing to remove the restriction on subjects of faith, imposed fetters severer than had ever been known to Catholic superstition. The Council, tired of the faded extravagances on the subject of freedom, were entranced for the moment by a species of eloquence for years unheard in the Assembly, and by the revival of feelings long strangers to their breasts; and listened to the declamations of the young enthusiast as they would have done to the preaching of Peter the Hermit. But the attempt was premature; the principles of infidelity were too deeply seated, to be shaken by transient bursts of genius; and the Council ultimately rejected the proposal by such a majority, as showed that ages of suffering must yet be endured before that fatal poison could be expelled from the social body.¹

¹ Lac. xiv.
20, 54.
Mign. ii.
423, 423.
Th. ix. 174.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 279,
294.

40.
General re-
turn of the
emigrants
and clergy.

Encouraged by this state of opinion in the capital, the emigrants and the banished priests assembled in crowds from every part of Europe. Fictitious passports were transmitted from Paris to Hamburg, and other towns, where they were eagerly purchased by those who longed ardently to revisit their native land. The clergy returned in still greater numbers, and were received with transports of joy by their faithful flocks, especially in the western departments, who for four years had been deprived of all the ordinances and consolations of religion. Again the infants were baptised; the sick visited; the nuptial benediction pronounced by consecrated lips; and the last rites performed over the remains of the faithful. On this, as on other occasions, however, the energy of the royalists consisted rather in words than in actions.² They avowed too openly the extent of their hopes not to awaken the vigilance of the revolutionary party; and spoke themselves

² Th. ix. 191.
Mign. ii. 424.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 294,
301.

into the belief that their strength was irresistible, without taking any steps to render it so, and when their adversaries were silently preparing the means of overturning it.

In effect, the rapid march of the Councils, and the declamations of the royalists, both in the tribune, in the club of Clichy, and in the public journals, awakened an extreme alarm among that numerous body of men, who, from having been implicated in the crimes of the Revolution, or gainers from its excesses, had the strongest interest in preventing its principles from receding. The Directory became alarmed for their own existence, by reason of the decided majority of their antagonists in both Councils, and the certainty that the approaching election of a third would almost totally ruin the republican party. It had already been ascertained that a hundred and ninety of the deputies were engaged to restore the exiled family, while the Directory could only reckon upon the support of a hundred and thirty; and the Ancients had resolved, by a large majority, to transfer the seat of the legislature to Rouen, on account of its proximity to the western provinces, whose royalist principles had always been so decided. The next election, it was expected, would nearly extinguish the revolutionary party; and the Directory were aware that the transition was easy for regicides, as the greater part of them were, from the Luxembourg to the scaffold.¹

In this extremity, the majority of the Directory, consisting of Barras, Rewbell, and La Révellière-Lepaux, resolved upon decisive measures. They could reckon with confidence upon the support of the army, which having been raised during the revolutionary fervour of 1793, placed under officers chosen by the privates in a period of extreme excitement, and constantly habituated to the intoxication of republican triumphs, was strongly imbued with democratic principles. This, in the existing state of affairs, was an assistance of immense importance. They therefore drew towards Paris a number of regiments,

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1797.

41.

Great alarm
of the Direc-
tory.

¹ Thibaudau, Mém. ii. 321. Lac. xiv. 61. Th. ix. 192.

42.

The republican majority of the Directory resolve on decisive measures. They change the ministry, and collect troops round Paris.

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1797.

twelve thousand strong, from the army of the Sambre and Meuse, which were known to be most republican in their feelings; and these troops were brought within the circle of twelve leagues round the legislative body, which the constitution forbade the armed force to cross. Barras wrote to Hoche, who was in Holland superintending the preparations for the invasion of Ireland, informing him of the dangers of the government; and he readily undertook to support them with all his authority. The ministers were changed: Bénézech, minister of the interior; Cochon, minister of police; Petiet, minister of war; Lacroix, minister of foreign affairs; and Truguet, of marine—who were all suspected of inclining to the party of the Councils, were suddenly dismissed. In their place were substituted, François de Neufchâteau in the ministry of the interior; Hoche in that of war; Lenoir-Laroche in that of the police; and Talleyrand in that of foreign affairs. The clear sagacity of this last politician led him to incline, in all the changes of the Revolution, to what was about to prove the victorious side; and his accepting office under the Directory at this crisis, was strongly symptomatic of the chances which were accumulating in their favour. Carnot, from this moment, became convinced that his ruin had been determined on by his colleagues. Barras and La Révellière had long borne him a secret grudge, which sprang from his having signed the warrant, during the Reign of Terror, for the arrest of Danton, who was the leader of their party.¹

¹ Carnot, 89, et seq. Lac. xiv. 61, 67. Th. ix. 309, 310. Mign. i. 424.

43.
Measures of Napoleon. He resolves to support the republicans, and for that purpose sends Lavalette to Paris.

Barras and Hoche kept up an active correspondence with Napoleon, whose co-operation was of so much importance to secure the success of their enterprise. He was strongly urged by the Directory to come to Paris and support the government; while, on the other hand, his intimate friends advised him to proceed there, and proclaim himself dictator, as he afterwards did on his return from Egypt. That he hesitated whether he should not, even at that period, follow the footsteps of Cæsar,

is avowed by himself; but he judged, probably wisely, that the period had not arrived for putting such a design in execution, and that the miseries of a republic had not yet been sufficiently experienced to insure the success of an enterprise destined for its overthrow. He was resolved, however, to support the Directory, both because he was aware that the opposite party had determined upon his dismissal, from an apprehension of the dangers which he might occasion to public freedom, and because their principles, being those of moderation and peace, were little likely to favour his ambitious projects. Early therefore, in spring 1797, he sent his aide-de-camp, Lavalette, who afterwards acquired a painful celebrity in the history of the Restoration, to Paris, to observe the motions of the parties, and communicate to him the earliest intelligence; and afterwards despatched Augereau, a general of decided character, and of known revolutionary principles, to that city to support the government. He declined coming to the capital himself, being unwilling to sully his hands, and risk his reputation, by a second victory over its inhabitants. But he had made his arrangements so that, in the event of the Directory being defeated, he should, five days after receiving intelligence of the disaster, make his entry into Lyons at the head of twenty thousand men, and, rallying the republicans everywhere to his standard, advance to Paris—passing thus, like another Cæsar, the Rubicon at the head of the popular party.¹

March.

25th July.

¹ Nap. iv.
226, 227.
Bour. i. 228,
232. Las
Cas. iv. 157.
Lav. i. 272.

But though Napoleon kept aloof himself, he was not the less determined to support the Directory and republican government. To awaken the republican ardour of the soldiers, and strike terror into the royalists in the capital, he celebrated the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille on 14th July, by a fête, on which occasion he addressed the following order of the day to his troops:—"Soldiers! This is the anniversary of the 14th July. You see before you the names of your companions in arms, who

44.
His proclamation to his soldiers on 14th July.

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1797.

have died on the field of battle for the liberty of their country: they have given you an example; you owe yourselves to your country; you are devoted to the prosperity of thirty millions of Frenchmen, to the glory of that name which has received such additional lustre from your victories. I know that you are profoundly affected at the misfortunes which threaten your country; but it is not in any real danger. The same men who have caused it to triumph over Europe in arms, are ready. Mountains separate us from France. You will cross them with the rapidity of the eagle, if it be necessary, to maintain the constitution, to defend liberty, to protect the government of the republicans. Soldiers! the government watches over the sacred deposit of the laws which it has received. From the instant that the royalists show themselves, they have ceased to exist. Have no fears of the result—and swear by the manes of the heroes who have died amongst us in defence of freedom, swear on our standards, eternal war to the enemies of the Republic and of the constitution.”¹

¹ Nap. iv.
525. Hist.
Parl. xxxvii.
319, 320.

45.
The army
strongly
supports the
Directory.
Extra-
vagant ad-
dresses from
the soldiers.

This proclamation proved extremely serviceable to the Directory. The flame spread from rank to rank through the whole army; addresses, breathing the most vehement republican spirit, were voted by all the regiments and squadrons of the army, and transmitted to the government and the Councils, with the signatures attached to them. Many of these productions breathed the extreme rancour of the Jacobin spirit. That of the 29th demi-brigade commenced with these words:—“Of all the animals produced by the caprice of nature, the vilest is a king, the most cowardly is a courtier, the worst is a priest. If the scoundrels who disturb France are not crushed by the forces you possess, call to your aid the 29th demi-brigade; it will soon discomfit all your enemies; Chouans, English, all will take to flight. We will pursue our unworthy citizens even into the chambers of their worthy patron George III., and the club of Clichy will undergo

the fate of that of Rency." Augereau brought with him the addresses of the soldiers of the Italian army. "Tremble, royalists!" said they; "from the Adige to the Seine is but a step—tremble! Your iniquities are numbered, and their reward is at the point of our bayonets." "It is with indignation," said the staff of the Italian army, "that we have seen the intrigues of royalty menace the fabric of liberty. We have sworn, by the manes of the heroes who died for their country, implacable war against royalty and royalists. These are our sentiments; these are yours; these are those of the country. Let the royalists show themselves; they have ceased to live." Other addresses, in a similar strain, flowed in from the armies of the Rhine and the Moselle; it was soon evident that the people had chosen for themselves their masters, and that, under the name of freedom, a military despotism was about to be established. The Directory encouraged and published all the addresses, which produced a powerful impression on the public mind. The Councils loudly exclaimed against these menacing declarations by armed men; but government, as their only reply, drew still nearer to Paris the twelve thousand men who had been brought from Hoche's army, and placed them at Versailles, Meudon, and Vincennes.¹

The party against whom these formidable preparations were directed, was strong in numbers and powerful in eloquence, but totally destitute of that reckless hardihood and fearless vigour which, in civil convulsions, is usually found to command success. Tronçon-Ducoudray, in the Council of the Ancients, drew, in strong and sombre colours, a picture of the consequences which would ensue to the Directory themselves, their friends, and the people of France, from this blind stifling of the public voice by the threats of the armies. In prophetic strains he announced the commencement of a reign of blood, which would be closed by the despotism of the sword. This discourse, pronounced in an intrepid accent, recalled to

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1797.

¹ Mign. ii.
427. Nap.
iv. 225.
Lac. xiv.
83, 85.

46.
Strength of
the opposite
party con-
sisted only
in talent and
eloquence.
Aug. 29.

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XXIV.

1797.

mind those periods of feudal tyranny, when the victims of oppression appealed from the kings or pontiffs, who were about to stifle their voice, to the justice of God, and summoned their accusers to answer at His dread tribunal for their earthly injustice. At the club of Clichy, Jourdan, Vaublanc, and Willot, strongly urged the necessity of adopting decisive measures. They proposed to decree the arrest of Barras, Rewbell, and La Révellière; to summon Carnot and Barthélemy to the legislative body; and if they refused to obey, to sound the tocsin, march at the head of the old sectionaries against the Directory, and appoint Pichegru the commander of the "legal insurrection." That great general supported this energetic course by his weight and authority; but the majority, overborne, as the friends of order and freedom often are in revolutionary convulsions, by their scruples of conscience, or their inherent timidity, decided against taking the lead in acts of violence, and resolved only to decree the immediate organisation of the national guard under the command of Pichegru. "Let us leave to the Directory," said they, "all the odium of beginning violence." Sage advice, if they had been combating an enemy, or lived in an age, capable of being swayed by considerations of justice; but fatal in the presence of enterprising ambition, supported by the weight of military power.¹

¹ Mign. ii.
427. Lac.
xiv. 85, 86.

47.
Slender
military
force at
their com-
mand. Re-
organisa-
tion of the
National
Guard de-
creed by the
Councils.
17th Fructi-
dor, Sept. 3.

The actual force at the command of the Councils was extremely small. Their body-guard consisted only of fifteen hundred grenadiers, who could not be relied on, as the event soon proved, in a contest with their brethren in arms; the national guard was disbanded, and without a rallying point; the royalists were scattered, and destitute of organisation. They had placed their little guard under the orders of their own officers; and on the 17th Fructidor, when both Councils had decreed the organisation of the national guard under Pichegru, this was to have been followed, on the next day, by a decree, directing the removal of the troops from the neighbour-

hood of Paris. But a sense of their weakness in such a strife filled every breast with gloomy presentiments. Pichegru alone retained his wonted firmness and serenity of mind. The Directory, on the other hand, had recourse to immediate violence. They appointed Augereau, notorious for his democratic principles, decision of character, and rudeness of manners, to the command of the 17th military division, comprehending the environs of Paris, and that city. In the night of the 17th Fructidor (September 3) they moved all the troops in the neighbourhood into the capital, and the inhabitants at midnight beheld, with breathless anxiety, twelve thousand armed men defile in silence over the bridges, with forty pieces of cannon, and occupy all the avenues to the Tuileries. Not a sound was to be heard but the marching of the men, and the rolling of the artillery, till the Tuileries were surrounded, when a signal gun was discharged, which made every heart that heard it throb with agitation.¹

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XXIV.

1797.

¹ Lac. xiv.
88, 91.
Mign. ii.
427. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
343, 350.

Instantly the troops approached the gates, and commanded them to be thrown open. Murmurs arose among the guard of the Councils; "We are not Swiss," exclaimed some. "We were wounded by the Royalists on the 13th Vendémiaire," rejoined others. Ramel, their faithful commander, who had received intelligence of the *coup d'état* which was approaching, had eight hundred men stationed at the entrances of the palace, and the remainder drawn up in order of battle in the court; the railings were closed, and every preparation was made for resistance. But no sooner did the staff of Augereau appear at the gates, than the soldiers of Ramel exclaimed, "Vive Augereau! Vive le Directoire!" and, seizing their commander, delivered him over to the assailants. Augereau now traversed the garden of the Tuileries, surrounded the hall of the Councils, arrested Pichegru, Willot, and twelve other leaders of the Assemblies, and conducted them to the Temple. The mem-

48.
Violent
measures
of the Di-
rectory.
They sur-
round the
Tuileries
with troops.
Revolution
of the 18th
Fructidor.

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1797.

bers of the Councils, who hurried in confusion to the spot, were seized and imprisoned by the soldiers. Those who were previously aware of the plot, met by appointment in the Odéon and the School of Medicine, near the Luxembourg, where they gave themselves out, though a small minority, for the Legislative Assemblies of France. Barthélemy was at the same time arrested by a body of troops despatched by Augereau, and Carnot only avoided the same fate by making his escape, almost without clothing, by a back door. By six o'clock in the morning all was concluded. Several hundred of the most powerful of the party of the Councils were in prison; and the people, wakening from their sleep, found the streets filled with troops, the walls covered with proclamations, and military despotism established.¹

The first object of the Directory was, to produce an impression on the public mind unfavourable to the majority of the Councils whom they had overturned. For this purpose, they covered the streets of Paris early in the morning with proclamations, in which they announced the discovery and defeat of a Royalist plot, the treason of Pichegru, and many members of the Councils, and that the Luxembourg had been attacked by them during the night. At the same time, they published a letter of General Moreau, in which the correspondence of Pichegru with the emigrant princes was proclaimed, and a letter from the Prince of Condé to Imbert, one of the Ancients. The streets were filled with crowds, who read in silence the placards. Mere spectators of a strife in which they had taken no part, they testified neither joy nor sorrow at the event. A few detached groups, issuing from the faubourgs, traversed the streets, exclaiming, "Vive la République! A bas les aristocrates!" But the people in general were as passive as in a despotic state. The minority of the Councils, who were in the interest of the Directory, continued their meetings in the Odéon and the School of Medicine;² but their inconsiderable numbers demonstrated

¹ Mign. ii.
428, 429.
Lac. xiv. 90,
93. Th. ix.
290, 293.
Bour. i. 230,
245. De
Stael, Rév.
Franc. ii.
184, 185.

49.
Passive sub-
mission of
the people.

² Th. ix. 295.
Mign. ii. 429,
430. Lac.
xiv. 94, 95.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 351,
355.

so clearly the violence done to the constitution, that they did not venture on any resolution at their first sitting, except one authorising the continuance of the troops in Paris.

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1797.

On the following day the Directory sent them a message in these terms :—"The 18th Fructidor should have saved the Republic and its real representatives. Have you not observed yesterday the tranquillity of the people, and their joy ? This is the 19th, and the people ask, Where is the Republic ; and what have the legislative body done to consolidate it ? The eyes of the country are fixed upon you ; the decisive moment has come. If you hesitate in the measures you are to adopt, if you delay a minute in declaring yourselves, it is all over both with yourselves and the Republic. The conspirators have watched while you were slumbering ; your silence restored their audacity ; they misled public opinion by infamous libels, while the journalists of the Bourbons and London never ceased to distribute their poisons. The conspirators already speak of punishing the Republicans for the triumph which they have commenced ; and can you hesitate to purge the soil of France of that small body of Royalists, who are only waiting for the moment to tear in pieces the Republic, and to devour yourselves ? You are on the edge of a volcano ; it is about to swallow you up ; you have it in your power to close it, and yet you deliberate ! To-morrow it will be too late : the slightest indecision would now ruin the Republic. You will be told of principles, of delays, of the pity due to individuals ; but how false would be the principles, how ruinous the delays, how misplaced the pity, which should mislead the legislative body from its duty to the Republic ! The Directory have devoted themselves to put in your hands the means of saving France ; but it was entitled to expect that you would not hesitate to seize them. They believed that you were sincerely attached to freedom and the Republic, and that you would not be afraid of the consequences of that first step. If the friends of kings

50.

Address of
the Direc-
tory to the
Councils.

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1797.

find in you their protectors—if slaves excite your sympathy—if you delay an instant—it is all over with the liberty of France; the constitution is overturned, and you may at once proclaim to the friends of their country that the hour of royalty has struck. But if, as they believe, you recoil with horror from that idea, seize the passing moment, become the liberators of your country, and secure for ever its prosperity and glory.” This pressing message sufficiently demonstrates the need which the Directory felt of some legislative authority to sanction their dictatorial proceedings. The remnant of the Councils yielded to necessity; a council of five was appointed, with instructions to prepare a law of *public safety*; and that proved a decree of ostracism, which condemned to transportation many of the noblest citizens of France.¹

¹ Th. ix. 298.
Lac. xiv. 94,
99. Mign.
ii. 430.

51.
Tyrannical
measures of
the minority
of the Coun-
cils.

Following the recommendation of that committee, the Councils, by a stretch of arbitrary power, annulled the elections of forty-eight departments, which formed a majority of the legislative bodies, and condemned to transportation to Guiana, Carnot, Barthélemy, Pichegru, Camille-Jourdan, Tronçon-Ducoudray, Henry Larivière, Imbert, Boissy d'Anglas, Willot, Cochon, Ramel, Murinais, and fifty other members of the legislative body. Merlin and François de Neufchateau were named Directors, in lieu of those who were exiled. The Directory carried on the government thereafter by the mere force of military power, without even the shadow of legal authority; the places of the expelled deputies were not filled up, but the assemblies left in their mutilated state, without either consideration or independence. Three men, without the aid of historical recollections, without the lustre of victory, took upon themselves to govern France on their own account, without either the support of the law or the co-operation of legal assemblies. Their public acts soon became as violent as the origin of their power had been illegal. The revolutionary laws against

the priests and the emigrants were revived ; and ere long the whole of those persons who had ruled in the departments since the fall of Robespierre, were either banished or dispossessed of their authority. The Revolution of the 18th Fructidor was not, like the victory of the 13th Vendémiaire, confined to the capital; it extended to the whole departments, revived everywhere the Jacobin ascendancy, and subjected the people over all France to the rule of the army and the revolutionary leaders.¹

The next step of the Dictators was to extinguish the liberty of the press. For this purpose a second proscription was published, which included the authors, editors, printers, and contributors to forty-two journals. As eight or ten persons were included in the devoted number for each journal, this act of despotism embraced nearly four hundred individuals, among whom was to be found all the literary genius of France. Laharpe, Fontanes, and Sicard, though spared by the assassins of the 2d September, were struck by this despotic act, as were Michaud and Lacretelle, the latter of whom composed, during a captivity of two years, his admirable history of the religious wars in France. At the same time the press was subjected to the censorship of the police; while the punishment of exiled priests, found in the territory of France, was extended to transportation to Guiana — a penalty worse than death itself. From the multitude of their captives, the Directory selected fifteen, upon whom the full rigour of transportation should be inflicted. These were Barthélemy, Pichegru, Willot, Rovère, Aubry, Bourdon de l'Oise, Murinais, de la Rue, Ramel, d'Osseville, Tronçon-Ducoudray, Barbé-Marbois, Lafond-Ladebat, (though the three last were sincere Republicans,) Brottier, and Laville-Heurnois. Their number was augmented to sixteen by the devotion of Letellier, servant of Barthélemy, who insisted upon following his master.² Carnot was only saved from the same fate by having escaped to Geneva.

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¹ Mign. ii.
432. Th. ix.
230, 299.
Lac. xiv.
103. Nap.
iv. 235.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 361,
382.

52.

Extinction
of the liber-
ty of the
press, and
transporta-
tion of the
Royalist
leaders.

² Carnot's
Memoirs,
212. Lav.
14, 70. Lac.
xiv. 103.
Mign. ii. 432.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 384,
396.

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"In the Directory," says he, "I had contributed to save the Republic from many dangers; the proscription of the 18th Fructidor was my reward. I knew well that republics were ungrateful; but I did not know, till I learned it from my own experience, that republicans were so much so as they proved to me."

53.
Cruel fate of
the exiles.

The transported victims were conveyed, amidst the execrations of the Jacobin mob, to Rochefort, from whence they were sent to Guiana. Before embarking, they received a touching proof of sympathy in the gift of 80,000 francs, by the widow of an illustrious scientific character, who had been one of the earliest victims of the Revolution. On the road they were lodged in the jails as common felons. During the voyage they underwent every species of horror; cooped up in the hold of a small vessel, under a tropical sun, they were subjected to all the sufferings of a slave-ship. No sooner were they landed, than they were almost all seized with the fevers of the climate, and owed their lives to the heroic devotion of the Sisters of Charity, who, on that pestilential shore, exercised the never-failing beneficence of their religion. Murinais, one of the Council of the Ancients, died, shortly after arriving at the place of their settlement, at Sinamari. Tronçon-Ducoudray pronounced a funeral oration over his remains, which his fellow-exiles interred with their own hands, from the words, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept." Soon after, the eloquent panegyrist himself expired. He calmly breathed his last, rejoicing on that distant shore that he had been faithful in his duty to the royal family. "It is nothing new to me," said he, "to see suffering, and learn how it can be borne. I have seen the Queen at the Conciergerie." The hardships of the life to which they were there subjected, the diseases of that pestilential climate, and the heats of a tropical sun, speedily proved fatal to the greater number of the unhappy exiles.¹ Pichegru survived the dangers, and was placed in a hut adjoining that of Billaud-Varennes and

¹ Lac. xiv.
104, 105,
118, 121.
Th. ix. 306.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 401,
424.

Collot-d'Herbois, whom, after the fall of Robespierre, he had arrested by orders of the Convention ; a singular instance of the instability of fortune amidst revolutionary changes.

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Pichegru, Willot, Barthélemy, Aubry, Ramel, and d'Ossoville, with the faithful Letellier, their voluntary companion in exile, contrived, some months after, to make their escape ; and after undergoing extreme hardships, and traversing almost impervious forests, succeeded in reaching the beach, from whence they were conveyed to Surinam in an open canoe. Aubry and Letellier perished, but the remainder reached England in safety. The Abbé Brottier, Bourdon de l'Oise, and Rovère, the two latter illustrious from their services on the 9th Thermidor, sank under their sufferings at Sinamari. The wife of Rovère, a young and beautiful woman, who had signalised herself, like Madame Tallien, by her generous efforts at the fall of Robespierre on behalf of humanity, solicited, and obtained from the Directory, permission to join her husband in exile ; but before she landed in that pestilential region, he had breathed his last. Several hundreds of the clergy, victims of their fidelity to the faith of their fathers, arrived in these regions of death ; but they almost all perished within a few months after their landing, exhibiting the constancy of martyrs on that distant shore, while the hymns of the new worship were sung in France by crowds of abandoned women, and the satellites of Jacobin ferocity. The strong minds and robust frames of Barbé-Marbois, and Lafond-Ladebat, alone survived the sufferings of two years ; and these, with eight of the transported priests, were all who were recalled to France by the humane interposition of Napoleon when he assumed the reins of power.¹

54.
Escape of
Pichegru
from
Guiana.

¹ Lac. xiv.
121, 126.
Th. ix. 306.

Meanwhile the Directory pursued with vigour its despotic course in France. A large proportion of the judges in the supreme courts were dismissed ; the institution of juries was abolished ; and a new and more rigorous law

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55.

Vigorous
and despotic
measures of
the Direc-
tory.

provided for the banishment of the nobles and priests. It was proposed that those who disobeyed or evaded its enactment, should become liable to transportation to Guiana ; the wives and daughters of the nobles who were married were not exempted from this enactment, unless they divorced their husbands, and married citizens of plebeian birth. But a more lenient law, which only subjected them to additional penalties if they remained, was adopted by the Councils. Two hundred thousand persons at once fell under the lash of these severe enactments ; their effect upon France was to the last degree disastrous. Then came "that memorable and awful emigration," says Sir James Mackintosh, "when all the proprietors and magistrates of the greatest civilised country of Europe were driven from their homes by the daggers of assassins ; when our shores were covered, as with the wreck of a great tempest, with old men, women, and children, and ministers of religion, who fled before the ferocity of their countrymen as before an army of invading barbarians."* The miserable emigrants fled a second time in crowds from the country, of which they were beginning to taste the sweets ; and society, which was reviving from the horrors of the Jacobin sway, was again prostrated under its fury. They carried with them to foreign lands that strong and inextinguishable hatred at republican cruelty which their own wrongs had excited, and mingling in society everywhere, both on the Continent and in the British isles, counteracted in the most powerful manner the enthusiasm in favour of democratic principles, and contributed not a little to the formation of that powerful league which ultimately led to the overthrow of the Republican power. Finally, the Councils openly avowed a national bankruptcy ; they cut off for ever, as will soon appear, two-thirds of the national debt of France, closing thus a sanguinary revolution by the extinction of freedom, the banishment of virtue, and the violation of public faith.¹

¹ D'Abr. iii.
324. De
Stael, ii. 187.
Lac. xiv.
105, 107.
Hard. iv.
523, 524.
Th. iv. 321.

* MACKINTOSH'S *Works*, iii. 243.

The revolution of the 18th Fructidor had been concerted between Napoleon and Barras long before it took place; the former was the real author of this catastrophe, and this is admitted even by his warmest admirers.¹ Augereau informed him, a month before, that he had opened to the Directory the designs of the revolutionary party; that he had been named governor of Paris; and that the dismissal of all the civil and military authorities was fixed on. Lavalette made him acquainted daily with the progress of the intrigue in the capital. The former was sent by him to aid in carrying it into execution.² * Napoleon was accordingly transported with joy when he received intelligence of the success of the enterprise. But these feelings were speedily changed into discontent at the accounts of the use which the government was making of its victory. He easily perceived that the excessive severity which they employed, and the indulgence of private spleen which appeared in the choice of their victims, would alienate public opinion, and run an imminent risk of bringing back the odious Jacobin rule.³

He has expressed in his Memoirs the strongest opinion on this subject. "It might have been right," says he,

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56.

This revolution was previously concerted with Napoleon.

¹ D'Abr. ii. 148.

² See the letters in Bour. i. 234, 263.

³ Bour. i. 234, 266.

* On the 24th June 1797, the majority of the Directory wrote to Napoleon, unknown to Barthélemy and Carnot:—"We have received, citizen-general, with extreme satisfaction, the marked proofs of devotion to the cause of freedom which you have recently given. You may rely on the most entire reciprocity on our parts. We accept with pleasure the offers you have made to fly to the support of the Republic." On the 22d July, Lavalette wrote to Napoleon:—"This morning I have seen Barras. He appeared strongly excited at what had passed. He made no attempt to conceal the division in the Directory. 'We shall hold firm,' said he to me; 'and, if we are denounced by the Councils, then we shall mount on horseback.' He frequently repeated that, in their present crisis, money would be of incalculable importance. I made to him your proposition, which he accepted with transport." Barras, on his part, on the 23d July, wrote to Napoleon—"No delay. Consider well, that it is by the aid of money alone that I can accomplish your generous intentions." Lavalette wrote on the same day to Napoleon—"Your proposition has been brought on the tapis between Barras, Rewbell, and La Révellière. All are agreed that without money we cannot surmount the crisis. They confidently hope that you will send large sums." On the 28th July, Lavalette again wrote to him—"The minority of the Directory still cling to hopes of an accommodation: the majority will perish rather than make any further concessions. It sees clearly the abyss which is opening beneath its feet. Such, however, is the

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57.

But he is
disgusted
with the
severe use
they make
of their
victory.

"to deprive Carnot, Barthélemy, and the fifty deputies, of their appointments, and put them under surveillance in some cities in the interior; Pichegru, Willot, Imbert, Cochon, and one or two others, might justly have expiated their treason on the scaffold; but to see men of great talent, such as Portalis, Tronçon-Ducoudray, Fontanes; tried patriots, such as Boissy d'Anglas, Dumolard, Murinais; supreme magistrates, such as Carnot and Barthélemy, condemned, without either trial or accusation, to perish in the marshes of Sinamari, was frightful. What! to punish with transportation a number of writers of pamphlets, who deserved only contempt and a trifling correction, was to renew the proscriptions of the Roman triumvirs; it was to act more cruelly than Fouquier-Tinville, since he at least put the accused on their trial, and condemned them only to death. All the armies, all the people, were for a republic; state necessity could not be alleged in favour of so revolting an injustice, so flagrant a violation of the laws and rights of the citizens."¹

Independently of the instability of any government which succeeds to so stormy a period as that of the Revolution, the constitution of France under the Directory

fatal destiny of Carnot, or the weakness of his character, that he has now become one of the pillars of the monarchical party, as he was of the Jacobins. He wishes to temporise." On the 3d August—"Everything here remains in the same state: great preparations for an attack by the Council of Five Hundred; corresponding measures of defence by the Directory. Barras says openly, 'I am only waiting for the decree of accusation to mount on horseback, and speedily their heads will roll in the gutter.'" On the 16th August, Lavalette wrote to Napoleon these remarkable words—"At last I have torn away the veil this morning from the Directory. Only attend to what Barras told me yesterday evening. The subject was the negotiations in Italy. Carnot pretended that Napoleon was in too advantageous a situation, when he signed the preliminaries, to be obliged to agree to conditions by which he could not abide in the end. Barras defended Buonaparte, and said to Carnot—"You are nothing but a vile miscreant; you have sold the Republic, and you wish to murder those who defend it, infamous scoundrel!" Carnot answered, with an embarrassed air—"I despise your insinuations; but one day I shall answer them."

Augereau wrote on the 12th August to Napoleon:—"Things remain much in the same state; the Clichyens have resumed their vacillating and uncertain policy; they do not count so much as heretofore on Carnot, and openly complain of the weakness of Pichegru. The agitation of these gentlemen is

¹ Nap. iv.
233, 234.
Bour. i.
235.

contained an inherent defect, which must sooner or later have occasioned its fall. This was ably pointed out from its very commencement by Necker, and arose from the complete separation of the executive from the legislative power.¹ In constitutional monarchies, when a difference of opinion on any vital subject arises between the executive and the legislature, the obvious mode of arranging it is by a dissolution of the latter, and a new appeal to the people; and whichever party the electors incline to, becomes victorious in the strife. But the French Councils, being altogether independent of the Directory, and undergoing a change every two years of a third of their members, became shortly at variance with the executive; and the latter, being composed of ambitious men, unwilling to resign the power they had acquired, had no alternative but to invoke military violence for its support. This is a matter of vital importance, and lying at the very foundation of a mixed government: unless the executive possesses the power of dissolving, by legal means, the legislature, the time must inevitably come when it will disperse them by force. Such a catastrophe is, in an especial manner, to be looked for when a nation is emerging from revolu-

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58.

Fatal defect
in the con-
stitution of
1795.¹ Necker,
Histoire de
la Revolution,
iv. 232.
Mad. de
Stael, iii. 170,
173.

extreme; for my part, I observe them, and keep incessantly stimulating the Directory, for the decisive moment has evidently arrived, and they see that as well as I do. Nothing is more certain than that, if the public mind is not essentially changed before the approaching elections, everything is lost, and a civil war remains our only resource." On the 31st August, Lavalette informed him, "At length the movement so long expected is about to take place. Tomorrow night the Directory will arrest fifteen or twenty deputies; I presume there will be no resistance." And on the 3d September, Augereau wrote to him—"At last, general, *my mission is accomplished!* the promises of the army of Italy have been kept last night. The Directory was at length induced to act with vigour. At midnight I put all the troops in motion; before daybreak all the bridges and principal points in the city were occupied, the legislature surrounded, and the members, whose names are enclosed, arrested and sent to the Temple. Carnot has disappeared. Paris regards the crisis only as a fête; the robust patriotic workmen of the faubourgs loudly proclaim the salvation of the Republic." Finally, on the 23d September 1797, Napoleon wrote in the following terms to Augereau: "The whole army applauds the wisdom and energy which you have displayed in this crisis, and has rejoiced sincerely at the success of the patriots. It is only to be hoped now that moderation and wisdom will guide your steps: that is the most ardent wish of my heart."—BOURRIENNE, i. 235, 250, 266; and HARD. iv. 508, 518.

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tionary convulsions ; as so many individuals are there implicated by their crimes in supporting the revolutionary regime, and a return to moderate or legal measures is so much the more dreaded, from the retribution which they may occasion to past delinquents.

59.
A more
equitable
government
was then
impossible
in France.

Though France suffered extremely from the usurpation which overthrew its electoral government, and substituted the empire of force for the chimeras of democracy, there seems no reason to believe that a more just or equitable government could at that period have been substituted in its room. The party of the Councils, though formidable from its union and its abilities, was composed of such heterogeneous materials, that it could not by possibility have held together if the external danger of the Directory had been removed. Pichegru, Imbert, Brottier, and others, were in constant correspondence with the exiled princes, and aimed at the restoration of a constitutional throne.¹ Carnot, Rovère, Bourdon de l'Oise, and the majority of the Club of Clichy, were sincerely attached to republican institutions. Dissension was inevitable between parties of such opposite principles, when they had once prevailed over their immediate enemies. The nation was not then in the state to settle down under a constitutional monarchy ; it required to be drained of its fiery spirits by bloody wars, and humbled in its pride by national disaster, before it could submit even for a brief period to the coercion of passion, and follow the regular occupations essential to the duration of real freedom.

¹ See Bour.
i. Append.

60.
This is the
true com-
mencement
of military
despotism
in France.

The 18th Fructidor is the true era of the commencement of military despotism in France, and, as such, it is singularly instructive as to the natural tendency and just punishment of revolutionary passions. The subsequent government of the country was but a succession of illegal usurpations on the part of the depositaries of power, in which the people had no share, and by which their rights were equally invaded, until tranquillity was restored by

the vigorous hand of Napoleon. The French have not the excuse, in the loss even of the name of freedom to their country, that they yielded to the ascendancy of an extraordinary man, and bent beneath the car which banded Europe was unable to arrest. They were subjected to tyranny in its worst and most degrading form; they yielded, not to the genius of Napoleon, but to the brutality of Augereau; they submitted in silence to proscriptions as odious and arbitrary as those of the Roman triumvirate; they bowed for years to the despotism of men so ignoble, that history has hardly preserved their names. Such is the consequence, and the never-failing consequence, of the undue ascendancy of democratic power. The French people did not fall under this penalty from any peculiar fickleness or inconstancy of their own; all other nations who have adopted the same principles have suffered the same penalties. They incurred it in consequence of the general law of Providence, that guilty passion brings upon itself its own punishment. They fell under the edge of the sword, from the same cause which subjected Rome to the arms of Cæsar, and England to those of Cromwell. "Constitutional government," says the republican historian, "is a chimera, at the conclusion of a revolution such as that of France. It is not under shelter of legal authority that parties whose passions have been so violently excited can arrange themselves and repose; a more vigorous power is required to restrain them, to fuse their still burning elements, and protect them against foreign violence. That power is the empire of the sword."¹

A long and terrible retribution awaited the sins of this great and guilty country. Its own passions were made the ministers of the justice of Heaven; its own desires the means of bringing upon itself a righteous punishment. Contemporaneous with the military despotism established by the victory of Augereau, began the foreign conquests of Napoleon. His triumphant car rolled over the world,

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¹ Th. ix.
308. De
Stael, ii. 221.
Nap. iv. 235.

61.
Terrible
retribution
which
awaited
France.

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crushing generations beneath its wheels; ploughing, like the chariot of Juggernaut, through human flesh; exhausting, in the pursuit of glory, the energies of republican ambition. France was decimated for its cruelty; the snows of Russia, and the hospitals of Germany, became the winding-sheet and the grave of its blood-stained Revolution. Infidelity may discern in this terrific progress the march of fatalism and the inevitable course of human affairs; let us discover in it the government of an overruling Providence, punishing the sins of a guilty age, extending to nations, with severe but merciful hand, the consequences of their transgression, and preparing, in the chastisement of present iniquity, the future repentance and amelioration of the species.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM THE PEACE OF CAMPO FORMIO TO THE RENEWAL OF THE
WAR. OCTOBER 1797—MARCH 1799.

THE two great parties into which the civilised world had been divided by the French Revolution, entertained different sentiments in regard to the necessity of the war which had so long been waged by the monarchies of Europe against its unruly authority. The partisans of democracy alleged that the whole misfortunes of Europe, and all the crimes of France, had arisen from the iniquitous coalition of kings to overturn its infant freedom; that, if its government had been let alone, it would neither have stained its hands with innocent blood at home, nor pursued plans of aggrandisement abroad; and that the Republic, relieved from the pressure of external danger, and no longer roused by the call of patriotic duty, would have quietly turned its swords into pruning-hooks, and, renouncing the allurements of foreign conquest, thought only of promoting the internal felicity of its citizens. The aristocratic party, on the other hand, maintained that democracy is in its very essence, and from necessity, ambitious; that its first effect is to ruin private enterprise by the spread of moneyed insecurity, and thus extend, in a frightful degree, the misery of the people, at the very time that it paralyses the resources of government; that the turbulent activity which it calls forth, the energetic courage which it awakens, the latent talent which it develops,

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1.

Views of the
different
parties on
the war.

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can find vent only in the enterprise of foreign warfare ; that, being founded on popular passion, and supported by the most vehement and enthusiastic classes in the state, it is driven into external aggression as the only means of allaying internal discontent; that it advances before a devouring flame, which, the instant it stops, threatens to consume itself; and that, in the domestic suffering which it engenders, and the stoppage of pacific industry which necessarily results from its convulsions, is to be found both a more cogent inducement to foreign conquest, and more formidable means for carrying it on, than either in the ambition of kings or the rivalry of their ministers.

2.
If the war
had been un-
interrupted,
it would
have been
hard to say
which was
right.

Had the revolutionary war continued without interruption from its commencement in 1792 till its conclusion in 1815, it might have been difficult to have determined which of these opinions was the better founded. The ideas of men would probably have been divided upon them till the end of time; and to whichever side the philosophic observer of human events, who traced the history of democratic societies in time past, had inclined, the great body of mankind, who judged merely from the event, would have leaned to the one or the other, according as their interests or their affections led them to espouse the conservative or the innovating order of things. It is fortunate, therefore, for the cause of historic truth, and the lessons to be drawn from past calamity in future times, that two years of Continental peace followed the first six years of this bloody contest, and that the Republican government, relieved of all grounds of apprehension from foreign powers, and placed with uncontrolled authority at the head of the vast population of France, had so fair an opportunity presented of carrying into effect its alleged pacific inclinations.

The coalition was broken down and destroyed. Spain had not only given up the contest, but had engaged in a disastrous maritime war to support the interests of the revolutionary state; Flanders was incorporated with its

1798.

3.

Fair opportunity afforded to France of pursuing a pacific system after the peace of Campo Formio.

territory, which had no boundaries but the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees; Holland was converted into an affiliated republic; Piedmont was crushed; Lombardy revolutionised, and its frontier secured by Mantua and the fortified line of the Adige. The Italian powers were overawed, and had purchased peace by the most disgraceful submissions; and the Emperor himself had retired from the strife, and gained the temporary safety of his capital by the cession of a large portion of his dominions. Great Britain alone, firm and unsubdued, continued the war, but without either any definite military object, now that the Continent was pacified, or the means of shaking the military supremacy which the arms of France had there acquired, and rather from the determination of the Directory to break off the recent negotiations, than from any inclination on the part of the British government to prolong, at an enormous expense, an apparently hopeless contest. To complete the means of restoring a lasting peace which were at the disposal of the French cabinet, the military spirit in France itself had signally declined with the vast consumption of human life in the rural departments during the war; the armies were everywhere weakened by desertion; and the most ambitious general of the Republic, with its finest army, was engaged in a doubtful contest in Africa, without any means, to all appearance, of ever returning with his troops to the scene of European ambition. Now, therefore, was the time when the alleged pacific tendency of the revolutionary system was to be put to the test, and it was to be demonstrated, by actual experiment, whether its existence was consistent with the independence of the adjoining states.¹

¹ Jom. x.
284.

The estimates and preparations of Great Britain for the year 1798 were suited to the defensive nature of the war in which she was now to be engaged, the cessation of all foreign subsidies, and the approach of an apparently interminable struggle to her own shores. The regular army

^{4.}
Limited estimates for the year in Britain.

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was fixed at one hundred and nine thousand men, besides sixty-three thousand militia—a force amply sufficient to insure the safety of her extensive dominions, considering the great protection she received from her innumerable fleets which guarded the seas. One hundred and four ships of the line, and three hundred frigates and smaller vessels, were put in commission, manned by one hundred thousand seamen. Supplies to the amount of £25,500,000 were voted, which, with a supplementary budget brought forward on 25th April 1798, in consequence of the expenses occasioned by the threatened invasion from France, amounted to £28,450,000—exclusive, of course, of the charges of the debt and sinking fund. But in providing for these great expenses, Mr Pitt unfolded an important change in his financial policy, and made the first step towards a system of taxation which, although more burdensome at the moment, is incomparably less oppressive in the end than that on which he had previously proceeded.¹

¹ James, ii. Appendix, No. 6. Ann. Reg. 184, 182, 211.

5.
Mr Pitt's
new finan-
cial policy.

He stated, that the time had now arrived when the policy hitherto pursued, of providing for all extraordinary expenses by loan, could not be carried farther without evident danger to public credit; that such a system, however applicable to a period when an extraordinary and forced effort was to be made to bring the war at once to a conclusion by means of foreign alliances, was unsuitable to the lengthened single-handed contest in which the nation was at last, to all appearance, engaged; that the great object now should be, to make the sum raised within the year as nearly as possible equal its expenditure, so as to entail no burden upon posterity. In pursuance of these principles, he proposed, instead of making the loan, as in former years, £19,000,000, to make it only £12,000,000, and raise the additional £7,000,000 by means of trebling the assessed taxes on house-windows, carriages, and horses. By this means an addition of only £8,000,000 would be made to the national debt, because £4,000,000 would be

paid off in the course of the year by the sinking fund; and, to pay off this £8,000,000, he proposed to keep on the treble assessed taxes a year longer; so that, at the expiration of that short period, no part of the debt then contracted would remain a burden on the nation—an admirable plan, and a near approach to the only safe system of finance—that of making the taxes raised within the year equal its expenditure—but one which was speedily abandoned amidst the necessities and improvidence of succeeding years.¹*

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1798.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxxiii. 1042,
1066.

The same period gave birth to another great change in the military policy of Great Britain, fraught in its ultimate results with most important effects, both upon the turn of the public mind, and the final issue of the war. This was the *Volunteer System*, and the general arming of the people. During the uncertainty which prevailed as to the destination of the great armaments preparing both in the harbours of the Channel and the Mediterranean, the British government naturally felt the greatest anxiety as to the means of providing for the national defence, without incurring a ruinous expense by the augmentation of the regular army. The discipline of that force was admirable, and its courage unquestionable; but its numbers were limited, and it appeared highly desirable to provide some subsidiary body which might furnish supplies of men to fill the chasms which might be expected to occur in the troops of the line, in the event of a campaign taking place on the British shores. For this purpose the militia, which, in fact, was part of the regular force, was obviously insufficient. Its officers were drawn from a class from whom the most effective military service was not to be expected; and, under the pressure of the danger which was anticipated, government, with the cordial approbation

6.
Establish-
ment of the
volunteer
system in
Great Bri-
tain.

* Even in that very year it was, to a certain degree, broken in upon. The assessed taxes produced only £4,500,000 instead of £9,000,000, as was expected; and the expenses having increased to £3,000,000 beyond the estimates, the loan was augmented to £15,000,000, exclusive of £2,000,000 for Ireland, besides £3,000,000 raised by means of exchequer bills.

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1798.

April 11.

May 6.

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. 1358,
1423.

7.
Noble
speech of
Mr Dundas
on this
occasion.

of the King, ventured upon the bold, but, as it turned out, wise and fortunate step, of allowing regiments of volunteers to be raised in every part of the kingdom. On the 11th April it was determined by the cabinet, in consequence chiefly of the energetic efforts of Mr Dundas, to take this decisive step; and soon after a bill was brought into parliament by that statesman, as secretary at war, to permit the regular militia to volunteer to go to Ireland, and to provide for the raising of volunteer corps in every part of the kingdom.¹

The speech which he made on this occasion was worthy of a British minister. Not attempting to conceal the danger which menaced the country, he sought only to rouse the determined spirit which might resist it. "The truth," said he, "is undeniable, that the crisis which is approaching must determine whether we are any longer to be ranked as an independent nation. We must take the steps which are best calculated to meet it; let us provide for the safety of the infirm, the aged, the women, the children, and put arms into the hands of the people. We must fortify the menaced points, accumulate forces round the capital, affix on the church-doors the names of those who have come forward as volunteers, and authorise members of parliament to hold commissions in the army without vacating their seats. I am well aware of the danger of intrusting arms to the whole people without distinction. I am no stranger to the disaffection, albeit much diminished, which still lingers amongst us; I know well that, under the mask of pursuing only salutary reforms, many are still intent upon bringing about a revolution, and for that purpose are willing to enter into the closest correspondence with the avowed enemies of their country. But, serious as is the danger of intrusting arms to a people embracing a considerable portion of such characters, it is nothing to the risk which we should run if, when invaded by the enemy, we were unprepared with any adequate means of defence. I trust to the good sense

of the great body of the people to resist the factious designs of such enemies to their country. I trust that the patriotism by which the immense majority of them are animated will preclude them from ever using their arms but for worthy purposes: I trust to the melancholy example which has been afforded in the neighbouring kingdom of the consequences of engaging in popular insurrection, for 'a warning to all Britons who shall take up arms, never to use them but in defence of their country, or the support of our venerable constitution.'¹

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1798.

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii.1358,
1423, 1429.

So obvious was the danger to national independence from the foreign invasion which was threatened, that the bill passed the House without opposition; and in a few weeks a hundred and fifty thousand volunteers were in arms in Great Britain. Mr Sheridan, as he always did on similar occasions, made a noble speech in support of government. Another bill, which at the same time received the sanction of parliament, authorised the King, in the event of an invasion, to call out the levy *en masse* of the population, conferred extraordinary powers upon lords-lieutenant and generals in command, for the seizure, on such a crisis, of horses and carriages, and provided for the indemnification, at the public expense, of such persons as might suffer in their properties in consequence of these measures. At the same time, to guard against the insidious system of French propagandism, the Alien Bill was re-enacted, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act continued for another year. The volunteer system met with perfect success in England, and brought on none of the evils which had been so sorely felt from the corresponding institution of the national guards in France. The reason is obvious—the crisis in England at this period was national, in France in 1789 it was social. It is in general safe to intrust arms to the people when their *national* feelings are roused:² it is always perilous to do so when their *social* passions are excited, and they see their real or supposed enemies in a particular class in

8.
The volunteer system is sanctioned by parliament.

² Parl. Hist.
xxxiii.1358,
1423, 1429,
1454.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

9.
Its great
effects, and
change in
the nature
of the war
which it
indicated.

their own country. The unanimity of Great Britain, during the latter period of the war with Napoleon, is an instance of the first : the convulsions of France and Germany, after the dethronement of Louis Philippe in 1848, an example of the second.

The adoption of these measures indicates an important crisis in the war—that in which popular energy was first appealed to, in order to *combat* the Revolution ; and governments, resting on the stubborn evidence of facts, confidently called upon their subjects to join with them in resisting a power which threatened to be equally destructive to the cottage and the throne. It was a step worthy of England, the first-born of modern freedom, to put arms into the hands of her people, to take the lead in the great contest of general liberty against democratic tyranny : and the event proved that the confidence of government had not been misplaced. In no instance did the volunteer corps deviate from their duty ; in none did they swerve from the principles of patriotism and loyalty which first brought them round the standard of their country. With the uniform which they put on, they cast off all the vacillating or ambiguous feelings of former years : with the arms which they received, they imbibed the firm resolution to defend the cause of England. Even in the great manufacturing towns, and the quarters where sedition had once been most prevalent, the newly raised corps formed so many centres of loyalty, which gradually expelled the former disaffection from their neighbourhood ; and to nothing more than this well-timed and judicious step, was the subsequent unanimity of the British empire in the prosecution of the war to be ascribed. Had it been earlier adopted, it might have shaken the foundations of society, and engendered all the horrors of civil war ; subsequently it would probably have come too late to develop the military energy requisite for success in the contest. Nor were the effects of this great change confined only to the British isles ; it extended to foreign nations and distant

times. It gave the first example of that touching development of patriotic ardour which afterwards burned so strongly in Spain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia; and in the British volunteers of 1798 was found the model of those dauntless bands by which, fifteen years afterwards, the resurrection of the Fatherland was accomplished.

While England was thus reaping the fruits, in the comparatively prosperous state of its finances and the united patriotism of its inhabitants, of the good faith and stability of its government, the French tasted, in a ruinous and disgraceful national bankruptcy, the natural consequences of undue democratic influence and revolutionary convulsion. When the new government, established by the revolution of the 18th Fructidor, began to attend to the administration of the finances, they speedily found that, without some great change, and the sacrifice of a large class of existing interests, it was impossible to carry on the affairs of the state. The resources of assignats and mandats were exhausted, and nothing remained but to reduce still further the most helpless class, the public creditors, and by their ruin extricate the government from its embarrassments.* As the income was calculated at the very highest possible rate, and the expenditure obviously within its probable amount, it was evident that some decisive measure was necessary to make the one square with the other. For this purpose, they at once struck off *two-thirds* of the debt, and thereby reduced its annual charge from 258 millions to 86.¹ To cover, indeed, the gross injustice of this proceeding, the public creditors received a paper,

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1798.

10.

French
finances.
National
bankruptcy.¹ See *ante*,
ch. xxiv.
§ 17.

* The most favourable view of the public revenue, which in the end proved to be greatly overcharged, only exhibited an income of—

616,000,000 francs.

But the expenses of the war

were estimated at . . . 283,000,000

Other services, . . . 247,000,000

Interest of debt, . . . 258,000,000

788,000,000

Annual deficit, . . . 172,000,000, or £7,000,000.

Being just about the same deficit which in 1789 was made the pretext to justify the Revolution.—BUCHÉZ and ROUX, *Hist. Parl. de France*, xxxvii. 431, 432.

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XXV.

1798.

Sept. 18,
1797.

¹ Dum. 32,
35. Th. ix.
321, 322.
Jom. x. 277.

11.
External
policy of the
French Di-
rectory.

secured over the national domains, to the extent of the remaining two-thirds, calculated at twenty years' purchase: but it was at the time foreseen, what immediately happened, that, from the total impossibility of these miserable fundholders turning to any account the national domains which were thus tendered in payment of their claims, the paper fell to a tenth part of the value at which it was forced on their acceptance, and soon became altogether unsaleable: so that the measure was, to all intents and purposes, a public bankruptcy. Notwithstanding the enfeebled state of the legislature by the mutilations which followed the 18th Fructidor, this measure excited warm opposition; but at length the revolutionary party prevailed, and it passed both Councils by a large majority. Yet such had been the abject destitution of the fundholders for many years, in consequence of the unparalleled depreciation of the paper circulation in which they were paid, that this destruction of two-thirds of their capital, when accompanied by the payment of the interest of the remainder in specie, was felt rather as a relief than a misfortune. Such were the consequences, to the moneyed interest, of the Revolution which they had so strongly supported, and which they fondly imagined was to raise an invincible rampart between them and national bankruptcy.¹

The external policy of the Directory soon evinced that passion for foreign conquest which is the unhappy characteristic of democratic states, especially in periods of unusual fervour, and forms the true vindication of the obstinate war which was maintained against France by the European monarchs. "The coalition," they contended, "was less formed against France than against the principles of the Revolution. Peace, it is true, is signed; but the hatred which the sovereigns have vowed against it is not, on that account, the less active; and the chicanery which the Emperor and England oppose in the way of a general pacification, by showing that they are only waiting an opportunity for a rupture, demonstrates the necessity of

establishing a just equilibrium between the monarchical and the democratic states. Switzerland, that ancient asylum of liberty, now trampled under foot by an insolent aristocracy, cannot long maintain its present government without depriving France of a part of its resources, and of the support which it would have a right to expect in the event of the contest being renewed." Thus the French nation, having thrown down the gauntlet to all Europe, felt, in the extremities to which they had already proceeded, a motive for still further aggressions and more insatiable conquests; obeying thus the moral law of nature, which, in nations as well as individuals, renders their career of guilt the certain instrument of its own punishment, by the subsequent and intolerant excesses into which it precipitates its votaries.¹

¹ Jom. x.
285. Th.
x. 25.

Holland was the first victim of the Republican ambition.

Not content with having revolutionised that ancient commonwealth, expelled the Stadtholder, and compelled its rulers to enter into a costly and ruinous war to support the interests of France, in which they had performed their engagements with exemplary fidelity, they resolved to subject its inhabitants to a convulsion of the same kind as that which had been terminated in the great parent Republic, by the 18th Fructidor. Since their conquest by Pichegru, the Dutch had had ample opportunity to contrast the ancient and temperate government of the house of Orange, under which they had risen to an unexampled height of prosperity and glory, with the democratic rule which had been substituted in its stead. Their trade was ruined, their navy defeated, their flag swept from the ocean, and their numerous merchant vessels lay rotting in their harbours. A reaction, in consequence, had become very general in favour of former institutions; and so strong and fervent was this feeling that the National Assembly, which had met on the first triumph of the Republicans, had never ventured to interfere with the separate rights and privileges of the provinces, as settled

12.
Attack upon
Holland.
Its situation
since the
French conquest.

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XXV.

1798.

¹ Th. x. 26,
27. Jom. x.
281. Ann.
Reg. 49, 50,
78, 80.

13.
State of the
Dutch As-
sembly at
this period.

² Th. x. 26.
Jom. x. 126.

14.
Measures of
the French
Directory to
revolution-
ise the state.

by prescription and the old constitution. The French Directory beheld with secret disquietude this leaning to the ancient order of things, and could not endure that the old patrician families should, by their influence in the provincial diets, temper in any degree the vigour of their central democratic government. To arrest this tendency, they recalled their minister from the Hague, supplied his place by Delacroix, a man of noted democratic principles, and gave Joubert the command of the armed force. Their instructions were to accomplish the overthrow of the ancient federal constitution, overturn the aristocracy, and vest the government in a Directory of democratic principles entirely devoted to the interests of France.¹

The Dutch Assembly was occupied at this juncture with the formation of a constitution, all previous attempts of that description having proved miserable failures. The adherents of the old institutions, who still formed a majority of the inhabitants, and embraced all the wealth and almost all the respectability of the United Provinces, had hitherto contrived to baffle the designs of the vehement and indefatigable minority, who, as in all similar contests, represented themselves as the only real representatives of the people, and stigmatised their opponents as a mere faction, obstinately opposed to every species of improvement. A majority of the Assembly had passed some decrees, which the democratic party strenuously resisted, and forty-three of its members, all of the most violent character, had protested against their adoption. It was to this minority that the French minister addressed himself to procure the overthrow of the constitution.²

At a public dinner, Delacroix, after a number of popular toasts, exclaimed, with a glass in his hand, "Is there no Batavian who will plunge a poniard into the constitution, on the altar of his country?" Amidst the fumes of wine, and the riot of intoxication, the plan for its overthrow was soon adopted; and its execution was fixed for the 22d January. On that night, the forty-

three deputies who had signed the protest assembled at the Hotel of Haarlem, and ordered the arrest of twenty-two of the leading deputies of the Orange party, and the six commissioners of foreign relations. At the same time the barriers were closed; the national guard called forth; and the French troops, headed by Joubert and Daendels, intrusted with the execution of the order. Resistance was fruitless; before daybreak those arrested were all in prison; and the remainder of the Assembly, early in the morning, met in the hall of their deliberations, where, surrounded by troops, and under the dictation of the bayonet, they passed decrees sanctioning all that had been done in the night, and introducing a new form of government on the model of that already established in France. By this constitution the privileges of the provinces were entirely abolished; the ancient federal union was superseded by a Republic, one and indivisible; the provincial authorities were changed into functionaries wholly dependent on the central government; a Council of Ancients and a Chamber of Deputies established, in imitation of those at Paris; and the executive authority confided to a Directory of five members, all completely in the interest of France. The sitting was terminated by an oath of hatred to the Stadtholder, the federal system, and the aristocracy: and ten deputies who refused to take it, were deprived of their seats on the spot. So completely was the whole done under the terror of the army, that some months afterwards, when the means of intimidation were removed, a number of deputies who had joined in these acts of usurpation gave in their resignation, and protested against the part they had been compelled to take in the transaction.¹

Jan. 22.

¹ Jom. x.
281, 282.
Th. x. 27.
Ann. Reg.
80, 81.

The inhabitants of Holland soon discovered that, in the pursuit of democratic power, they had lost all their ancient liberties. The first step of the new Directory was to issue a proclamation, strictly forbidding, under

15.
Tyrannical
acts of the
new Direc-
tory.

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1798.

severe penalties, all petitions from corporate bodies or assemblages of men, and declaring that none would be received but from insulated individuals; thereby extinguishing the national voice in the only quarter where it could make itself heard in a serious manner. All the public functionaries were changed, and their situations filled by persons of the Jacobin party; numbers were banished or proscribed; and, under the pretext of securing the public tranquillity, domiciliary visits and arrests were multiplied in the most arbitrary manner. The individuals suspected of a leaning to the adverse party were everywhere deprived of their right of voting in the primary assemblies; and, finally, to complete the destruction of all the privileges of the people, the sitting Assembly passed a decree, declaring itself the legislative body, thereby depriving the inhabitants of the election of their representatives. This flagrant usurpation excited the most violent discontents in the whole country, and the Directors soon became as obnoxious as they had formerly been agreeable to the populace. Alarmed at this state of matters, and apprehensive lest it should undermine their influence in Holland, the French Directory enjoined General Daendels to take military possession of the government. He accordingly put himself at the head of two companies of grenadiers, and proceeded to the palace of the Directory, where one member was seized, while two resigned, and the other two escaped. A provisional government was immediately formed, consisting of Daendels and two associates, all entirely in the interest of France, without the slightest regard to the wishes of, or any pretence even of authority from, the people. Thus was military despotism the result of revolutionary changes in Holland, as it had been in France, within a few years after they had been first commenced amidst the general transports of the lower orders.¹

May 4.

¹ Ann. Reg.
82, 85. Jom.
xi. 14, 15.

SWITZERLAND was the next object of the ambition of

the Directory. The seclusion of that beautiful country, its retirement from all political contests for above two centuries, the perfect neutrality which it had maintained between all the contending powers since the commencement of the Revolution, the indifference which it had evinced to the massacre of its citizens on the 10th August, could not save its secluded valleys from the devouring ambition of the Parisian enthusiasts. As little, it must be owned with regret, could the wisdom and stability of its institutions, the perfect protection which they afforded to persons and property, the simple character of its inhabitants, or the steady prosperity which they had enjoyed for above five centuries under the influence of the existing order of things, save a large proportion of them from the pernicious contagion of French democracy.

Switzerland, as all the world knows, comprises the undulating level surface between the Alps and the Jura, watered by the lakes of Geneva and Neufchâtel, and stretching from the Rhone to the Rhine, as also the great central mass of mountains which separates it from the plain of Lombardy, and is bounded on the east by the Alps of the Tyrol, on the west by the Jura. The great stony girdle of the globe runs through its whole territory from east to west, and branches out beyond it to the Pyrenean range on the one side, and the Tyrol and Styrian Alps, the Carpathian Mountains, the ranges of Epirus and Macedonia, the Caucasus and Taurus, on the other. The average height of this mountain range, where it passes through the Swiss territory, is ten or eleven thousand feet; but in some places it rises to an elevation much more considerable, and on the snowy summits of Mont Blanc, Mont Rosa, and the Ortler Spitz, reaches above fifteen thousand feet.

The level part of Switzerland, which lies between the Alps and the Jura, more closely, perhaps, than any other part of Europe, resembles the English plains. There are the same rich and thickly-peopled fields; the same smooth

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1798.

16.
Political
state of
Switzer-
land.

17.
Physical de-
scription of
Switzer-
land.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

18.

Resemblance of the level part of the country to England.

¹ Personal observation.19.
Effects of the general security.

ever-verdant meadows ; the same prevalence of orchards, gardens, and fruit-trees ; the same beautiful hedgerow timber ; the same spread of the cottages of the poor in fearless security at a distance from the villages. In Spain, Portugal, the greater part of France and Germany, and even in the fertile plains of Lombardy and Belgium, the peasantry all live in the villages. The intermediate country, though parcelled into many different estates or farms, presents only an unvarying cultivated surface ; and the wearied swains are to be seen in the evening returning seated on their horses, often four or five miles from the scene of their daily toil. Experienced insecurity, arising from the desolation of foreign wars, or the weight of internal oppression, has introduced this custom, and compelled the cultivators, as the only mode of safety, to take refuge in walled villages and the shelter of mutual protection. But in Switzerland, equally with England, the long-established blessings of freedom and universal security of property have relaxed this inconvenient system, which at once adds so much to the labour of the husbandman and takes away so much from the beauty of his fields.¹

This security has diffused the cottages of the agriculturists over the whole country, in the centre of their little farms or estates. The wants of their families in these separate dwellings, or the markets in the neighbouring towns, have led to the multiplication of cattle, the formation of orchards, the tending of gardens, the enclosing of fields, and the planting of hedgerow timber. The charm which an Englishman feels in the contemplation of such scenery is not derived merely from its inherent amenity ; it is allied to moral influences, it springs from political blessings. It recalls the home of infancy, the paradise of youth, the scene of domestic love, the hearth of filial affection, the first opening of life, when its sunshine was still unclouded. It bespeaks a country in which these blessings, the choicest gifts of Heaven, have been for

many ages securely enjoyed by the people ; in which the vices and ambitions of cities have not yet corrupted those little nurseries of virtuous feeling ; and in which all the changes of time have not been able to affect those fountains of happiness and patriotism which spring at once from the influences of nature.

The most ardent imagination, fraught with the richest stores of poetical imagery, can conceive nothing approaching to the beauty of the mountain scenery of Switzerland. Presenting often in a single landscape every gradation of vegetation, from the saxifrages and mosses which nestle in crevices of rocks on the verge of perpetual snow, to the olive, the vine, sometimes even the orange tree and citron, which flourish amidst the balmy breezes of the Mediterranean sea, it exhibits the varied features which characterise similar lofty ranges in other parts of the world ; but to them it has added a charm which is peculiarly its own. This is found in the number, the industry, and the general wellbeing of the peasantry. Much as this interesting addition to natural beauty appears in Alpine regions in many parts of the world, it is nowhere exhibited in such perfection as among the mountains of Switzerland. The universal possession of landed property by the cultivators has diffused the efforts of industry, and the charm of cultivated scenery, into the wildest recesses of savage nature. The smiling cottage, the shaven green, the flowering orchard, are to be seen on the verge of perpetual desolation ; the glacier bounds the corn-field ; the meadow is carved out of the rocks^{1*}—and, by a peculi-

20.
Extraordinary beauty of the mountain region.

¹ Personal observation. Malte-Brun, vii. 97, 104. Macaulay's Essays, Milton.

* Rousseau has described this striking peculiarity of Swiss scenery with the colours of poetry :—" Tantôt d'immenses roches pendaient en ruines au-dessus de ma tête ; tantôt de hautes et bruyantes cascades m'inondaient de leur épais brouillard ; tantôt un torrent éternel ouvrait, à mes côtés, un abîme dont les yeux n'osaient sonder la profondeur. Quelquefois je me perdais dans l'obscurité d'un bois touffu ; quelquefois, en sortant d'un gouffre, une agréable prairie réjouissait tout-à-coup mes regards. Un mélange étonnant de la nature sauvage et de la nature cultivée montrait partout la main des hommes, où l'on eût cru qu'ils n'avaient jamais pénétré : à côté d'une caverne on trouvait des maisons ; on voyait des pampres secs où l'on n'eût cherché que des ronces, des vignes dans des terres éboulées, d'excellents fruits sur des rochers, et des champs dans des précipices."—*Nouvelle Héloïse*, Letter xxiii. vol. i. p. 113.

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1798.

21.
Singular
failure of
the arts in
portraying
Swiss
scenery.

arity which belongs only to Helvetia, the extremes of sterility and riches, of amenity and grandeur, of beauty and sublimity, are brought into close proximity with each other. "Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairyland, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the avalanche."*

That the inhabitants of Switzerland feel, in its full force, the unequalled charms of the country of their birth, need be told to none who have witnessed the tears which in distant lands any of their beautiful Ranz-des-vaches bring into the eyes of the Swiss; or who know of the *maladie du pays*, which so often in mature life compels those who have strayed from them, in quest of fortune or subsistence, to return to their native valleys. Yet it is remarkable, that these exquisite features have never inspired the soul either of a poet or a painter. No artist has ever transferred to canvass the sun setting on the Jungfrauhorn, as seen from Interlachen; or the glow of evening on Mont Blanc, as it is daily presented to the inhabitants of Geneva; or the awful sublimity of the Lake of Uri, so well known to all who have visited the Forest Cantons. No Swiss Salvator has sought inspiration amidst the savage grandeur of its rocks and cataracts; no Helvetian Claude has dipped his pencil in the hues of heaven, in portraying its sunsets. What is still more remarkable, these enchanting features have never inspired the soul of poetry, or attracted its powers to their description. Scotland can boast a Scott who has immortalised its mountains; Ireland, a Moore, who has breathed the lyric spirit over its glens; England, a Thomson† and a

* "Veggion che per dirupi e fra ruine
S'ascende alla sua cima alta e superba;
E ch'è fin là di nevi e di pruine
Sparsa ogni strada: ivi ha poi fiori ed erba.
Presso al canuto mento il verde crine
Frondeggia, e'l ghiaccio fede ai gigli serba,
Ed alle rose tenere."

TASSO, *Gerus. Lib. xv. 46.*

† Thomson was a Scotchman by birth, but the scenes he describes are chiefly English in their character.

Cowper, who have portrayed with fervent animation its unobtrusive charms. But though the Swiss soil has not been deficient in the poetic spirit, as the genius of Gessner and Zimmerman can testify, no great works of imagination have been dedicated to the beauty of the Alps. Coleridge's noble Ode to Mont Blanc contains more true poetry on the subject, than the whole German and French literature can boast. Perhaps their unequalled grandeur has overwhelmed the mind even of the most fervent worshippers of wild sublimity; perhaps the peculiar charms of their scenery, in which, as in all the works of nature, the most exquisite finishing in detail is combined with the most perfect generality of effect, has deterred others from a difficulty, to be conquered only by the greatest genius, guiding the most resolute perseverance, and apparently altogether beyond the reach of the wealth-seeking spirit of modern art.

One great beauty of Switzerland, as of all countries containing ranges of mountains of a similar elevation, is to be found in the different gradations of vegetable life which are to be met with, from their base to their summit; exhibiting thus, in the distance often of a few miles, an epitome of all the varieties of scenery, from the borders of the torrid to those of the frozen zone. "Nature," says Rousseau, "seems there to take a pleasure in appearing in opposition to herself, so different are her features in the same places under different aspects. In the east the flowers of spring, in the south the fruits of autumn, to the north the ices of winter. She unites all seasons in one instant, all climates in one spot. Every kind of earth is there blended together; and they form a compound, unknown elsewhere, of the productions of the plain with those of the Alps."* On the southern side of the Alps, on the enchanting banks of the Italian lakes, nature appears in her loveliest aspect: the harsher features of the rocky hills are covered with an ever-verdant foliage; the vine

22.
Gradations
of vegetation
in the Alps.

* *Nouvelle Heloise*, Letter xxiii.

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XXV.

1798.

and the olive flourish on their smiling shores ; numerous white villages, with elegant spires, attest both the number and wellbeing of the inhabitants ; and the unruffled waters reflect at once the peopled cliffs and unclouded heaven. Higher up, the woody region begins : huge sweet-chestnuts interlace their boughs, amidst detached masses of rock ; closely shaven meadows indicate the commencement of the pastoral zone, but rich orchards flourish in sheltered spots, and noble woods of beech, oak, and birch, still clothe the mountain sides. The magnificence and variety of the objects in these elevated regions dispose the mind to contemplation, and renew, even in advanced years, the elasticity and buoyancy of youth.^{1*}

¹ Personal observation.

23.
The woody,
grass, and
snowy
regions.

Above this, succeeds the region of the fir and the larch ; the lofty cliffs are fringed to their summit with pines, the sombre hue of which contrasts with their lighter tints ; wildness and grandeur form the general character of nature ; but numerous spires are to be seen amidst the recesses of the forest, and wherever a level spot is to be found, the green meadow and wood-built cottage bespeak the residence of industrious and happy man. Higher still, the woody region disappears ; a few stunted pines alone cast their roots in a sterile soil ; the rocks are interspersed with cold and desolate pastures, where, during a few months of summer only, the herds, driven up from the valleys beneath, find a scanty subsistence ; while in the loftier parts, frequent streaks of white indicate, even in the heats of the dog-days, the approach to the region of perpetual snow. Highest of all, a silver mantle of snow is spread over gigantic piles of bare rock, and sharp pinnacles of dazzling brightness shoot up into the deep blue vault of heaven. It never rains in these lofty regions ;² the frequent clouds descend only in snowy showers, which unceasingly add to the everlasting shroud

² Personal observation.

* "Qui non Palazzi, non teatro o loggia
Ma 'n lor vece un abete, un faggio, un pino
Tral'erba verde c'èl bel monte vicino
Levan di terra al ciel nostro intellette."—PETRARCH.

of the mountain ; and when the mists roll away, and the atmosphere becomes serene, a fresh covering of virgin purity ever reflects back the bright but powerless rays of the sun.

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XXV.
1798.

24.
Lakes of
Switzer-
land.

Another of the chief natural beauties of Switzerland consists in the number, variety, and historical recollections of its lakes. First in interest, though not in romantic beauty, is the Lemman Lake, in whose glassy bosom the peaks of Mont Blanc and the rocks of Meillerie are perpetually reflected, but which derives a yet higher interest from the associations with which it is connected : for there Cæsar began his great career, and Rousseau dreamt of ideal innocence, and Voltaire combated in the cause of humanity,* and Gibbon concluded his immortal work. The lakes of Neufchâtel and Bienne,—of Thun and Brienz,—of Zurich and Zug,—of Constance and of Walenstatter, exhibit scenes of varied yet surpassing loveliness, sometimes spreading amidst wide and smiling expanses of woods, villages, and corn-fields, at others contracting into narrow shut-in scenes, or overhung by lofty pine-clad cliffs. But all must yield in varied beauty, savage grandeur, and historic interest, to the Lake of Luzern ; for on its banks are to be found the field of Rütli,—the chapel of Tell,—the Plain of Morgarten ; and at its upper extremity, in the cradle of Swiss independence, is to be seen, in the Lake of Uri, the sublimest specimen of European scenery.¹

¹ Personal
observation.

Although Mount St Gothard is far from being the highest mountain in Switzerland,† yet it is the central point of its vast chains, and several of the greatest rivers of Europe take their rise from its sides. To the east, the Rhine descends down the cold pastoral valley below

25.
Great cen-
tral chain
of the St
Gothard.

* Would that he had never combated in any less worthy cause !

† Its highest summits are only 11,250 feet high, whereas Mont Blanc is 15,780 feet, Mont Rosa 15,585, and the Ortler Spitz, in the Grisons, 15,430. The summit of the Pass of the St Gothard is 6380 feet.—EBEL, *Manuel de Voyages en Suisse*, i. 319, and ii. 211, 503. An inch, it is to be observed, is to be added to French feet in turning them into English.

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Disentis, and winds its way through the solitudes of the Grisons to the German plains : on the west, the Rhone leaps at once a mighty spring from the huge and glittering glacier which bears its name : on the north, the Reuss descends in a headlong impetuous torrent through the valley of Schollenen to the Lake of Uri, and finds its way at last, mingled with the Rhine, to the German Ocean ; while to the south, the Tessino, issuing from the snowy summit of the pass by which the traveller crosses into Italy, is rapidly swelled by the torrents from the adjoining glaciers, forces its way in a raging torrent through the rocks of Faïdo, and is already a noble stream when it swells into the lovely expanse of the Lago Maggiore, ere it rolls its tributary waters to the Po. Thus, in every contest for the possession of Switzerland, the principal efforts of the contending parties have always been directed to get possession of the St Gothard ; not only from its containing an important pass over the Alps into Italy, but from its forming the great central mountain mass from which the chief rivers of the country take their rise, and by the possession of which their upper valleys may be turned.¹

¹ Personal observation.

26.
Great lateral
valleys in
the Alps.

To those who, for the first time, come in sight of the Alps, either from the lofty ridge of the Jura,* the level expanse of Lombardy, or the swelling hills of Suabia, they present the appearance of a crowd of rugged and inaccessible peaks, tossed together in such wild confusion, and so closely jammed together, as to render it to appearance equally impossible to attempt to classify, or to find a passage through them. But in reality this immense mass of mountains, little less, in the Swiss territories alone, than a hundred and fifty miles long by eighty to a hundred broad, is penetrated over its whole breadth by three great valleys, running from east to west, athwart

* The view of Mont Blanc and the Alps of Savoy from the Jura, where the road from Dole to Geneva traverses its summit, is by far the finest distant view of the Alps, and, if seen in a clear day, presents the most superb panoramic scene in Europe.

the range as it were, and which, if the attention is fixed on them, render its geography a matter of very easy apprehension.

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The first of these valleys is that of the Rhone, which, commencing with the snowy summit of the Furca, the western front of the St Gothard, runs nearly due west between lofty ranges of mountains for seventy miles, in a valley seldom more than two miles broad, and then, meeting at Martigny the eastern ridge of Mont Blanc, turns sharp to the north, and flows down to the lake of Geneva. The second is that of the Rhine, which, descending from its double source in the glacier of the Hinter Rhin and the eastern slope of the St Gothard at Disentis, unites both streams at Reichenau in the Grisons, and flows through a broader valley, sometimes six or seven miles broad, between the Alps of Glarus and those of the Grisons, until, after a mountain course of seventy miles, it spreads out into the broad expanse of the Lake of Constance, beyond the utmost verge of the hills. Thus, these two great valleys, uniting in the lofty plateau of the St Gothard as their common centre, traverse the whole extent of the Swiss territory from east to west. The third great valley of the Alps is that of the Inn, which, taking its rise in the lofty and desolate mountains of the Upper Engadine, in the Grisons, a little to the south-east of the source of the Hinter Rhin, runs in a north-eastern direction, in a valley varying from one to six miles in breadth, for a distance of nearly two hundred miles through the mountains, till, after washing the ramparts of Innspruck, it issues into the Bavarian plains under the towers of Kuffstein.¹

27.
Valleys of
the Rhone,
the Rhine,
and the Inn.

¹ Personal
observation.

Generally speaking, the range of Alps which separates the valleys of the Rhone from the Italian plains, is higher than that which intervenes between them and the level country in the north of Switzerland; and, accordingly, all the passes by which the Alps are crossed — the St Bernard, the Simplon, the St Gothard, the Splugen, the

28.
Mountains
on either
side of these
valleys.

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Bernhardin, the Albula, the Monte Selvio, and the Brenner—lie to the south of these valleys. This prodigious snowy range, comprising Mont Blanc, the Great St Bernard, Monte Rosa, the St Gothard, the Ortler Spitz, and the Alps of the Grisons, is pierced on either side of its crest by a series of lateral valleys, the waters of which, to the north, descend through pine-clad ravines till they are intercepted by the course of the Rhine and the Rhone, into which they fall at right-angles; while those to the south, after traversing narrow vales, overshadowed by rich walnuts and umbrageous chestnuts, all swell the waters of the Po. But although this is the great geographical division of the country, yet, to the north of the Rhine and Rhone, some of the most stupendous and interesting of the Alps, embracing the Jungfrauhorn, Wetterhorn, Eiger, and Titlis, are situated; and it is among their recesses that the cradles of Swiss independence, and the most interesting specimens of Swiss civilisation, are to be found.¹

¹ Personal observation.

29.
General want of practicable roads through the country at this period.

The noble chaussées, first projected and executed by Napoleon, and since imitated with such success by the Swiss and Austrian governments, which now traverse the Alps by seven different passes, all easy for carriages,* were at the period of the French invasion unknown. One road alone, from Germany into Italy, viz., that by the Brenner, the height of which was 4300 feet, was practicable at all seasons of the year for artillery carriages; the whole roads from France into Italy crossed the Alps by mere mountain-paths, altogether impracticable for artillery, and in great part sufficiently difficult for horsemen or foot-soldiers. Carriages were taken down before commencing the ascent of Mont Cenis on the French side, and put together again at Susa on the Italian; the passages of the Great and Little St Bernards were the same rude bridle-roads which they had been since the days of

* Viz., the Mont Cenis, the Simplon, the St Gothard, the Splügen, Bernhardin, the Brenner, and the Monte Selvio.

Hannibal; the Simplon could be passed only by a break-neck path, ascending the ravine on the northern side, barely accessible even to active travellers; the St Gothard was crossed by a rude mountain-road, impracticable for artillery; the roads over the Bernhardin, the Splugen, the Albula, the Monte Selvio, were only difficult paths which horsemen could scarcely surmount, and carriages never thought of attempting. Thus, although the level part of Switzerland, lying between the Jura and the Alps, was wholly defenceless, and it had no fortresses worthy of the name to arrest the invader's progress; yet when the plain was passed and the mountains reached, a most formidable warfare awaited him; for there were to be found rugged dells, accessible only by narrow straits impracticable for artillery, and a numerous sturdy population of freemen to defend the homes of simple virtue.¹

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¹ Personal observation.

In ancient times Helvetia was inhabited by fierce and savage tribes, whom all the might of the legions for long had failed in subduing. Like the Caucasians or Affghans in modern days, the inhabitants of the Alps maintained a rude and savage independence, unmolested in their inaccessible rocks and thickets, and acknowledging little more than a nominal subjection to the government of the Capitol. In the neighbourhood, indeed, of the highways over the Great St Bernard, Mont Cenis, and the Brenner, order, as in the vicinity of the Russian stations on the Caucasus, was tolerably preserved; but in the remoter valleys the people were still independent. It was not till the time of Augustus, that Drusus, by the aid of two powerful armies, effected the subjugation of the savage mountaineers of the Rhætian and Julian Alps, and the son of the emperor was proud of the trophy on which the names of four-and-twenty tribes, subjugated by his arms, were enumerated. Even under the Emperors the interior of the mountains was almost unexplored; the source of the Rhine was unknown;² and in the prevailing fable that the Rhone took its rise in the most hidden parts

30.

Savage state
of Switzer-
land in the
time of the
Romans.² Tchoccke,
Hist. de la
Nation
Suisse, 21.
Plin. Hist.
Nat. iii. c.
24.

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of the earth, between the pillars of the sun, the modern traveller recognises with interest reference to the glittering pile of the glacier of the Rhone, which, when seen through the dark pine forests, by which alone it can be approached from the lower part of the Valais, might with little effort of imagination have given rise to that popular belief.

31.
Early influence of the religious houses in spreading cultivation.

It is to the industry and perseverance of the Gothic race, who, on the overthrow of the Roman empire, penetrated into the Alpine recesses, that the first effectual cultivation of the Swiss valleys is to be ascribed. The castles of the nobles were generally situated at the entrance of the hills, and they held large portions of the level country under their sway; but it was the indulgent rule and beneficent activity of the monks and bishops which penetrated the mountain straits, and settled in the narrow glens of Helvetia a strenuous, peaceable, and industrious population. It was Religion which spread its ægis over these savage wilds, and first converted the fierce shepherds and huntsmen of the Alps into industrious and peaceable citizens. At Sion and St Maurice in the Valais, St Gall, the Abbey of Einsiedeln, Zurich, Luzern, the Abbey of Engelberg, at the foot of the Titlis, and indeed in every part of the Alps, it was on the ecclesiastical estates that the first symptoms of agricultural improvement were to be seen, and the first habits of regular industry were acquired. So widely had these habits spread, and so considerable was the number of strenuous cultivators, who had carved out small estates for themselves out of the forests and rugged slopes of the interior of the mountains, that Switzerland was already a country of little proprietors, when the authority of the house of Austria was thrown off by the efforts of William Tell; and revolution there, as afterwards in America, was deprived of its most dangerous qualities by taking place among a simple uncorrupted people, already for the most part proprietors of the land which they cultivated.¹

¹ Planta's Switzerland, I. c. ii. 112, 159.

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32.

Immense
blessings
occasioned
by the diffu-
sion of land
among the
peasants.

If it be true, as has been beautifully said, (and few who know mankind will doubt it), that wherever you see a bird-cage in a window, or a flower in a garden, you are sure the inmates are wiser and better than their neighbours, there are few countries in which there are so many wise and good men as in Switzerland. In truth, of all the many charms of that delightful country, there is none so universal and interesting as the general wellbeing and comfort of the people. To assert, indeed, that poverty is unknown in that land of freedom, is to assert what never has obtained, and never will obtain, among mankind. Doubtless vice, folly, and misfortune produce the same effects there as elsewhere in the world; and an indigent population, in a territory so contracted, has in some places arisen from the occupation of all the land susceptible of cultivation, and the fluctuations of the manufactures on which a part of the population has come to depend. But generally speaking, the condition of the people is comfortable; in many places, as the Forest Cantons and the borders of the Lake of Zurich, in Appenzell and the Pays de Vaud, they are affluent beyond any other peasantry in Europe. The white-washed cottages, with their green doors and window-shutters, their smiling gardens and flowering orchards, the well-clad figures of the inhabitants, their frequent herds and flocks, bespeak, in language not to be misunderstood, that general wellbeing which can exist only where land has been honestly acquired, and virtuous habits are generally diffused. So dense is the population in some districts, that in five parishes and two villages on the Lake of Zurich there are only 10,400 acres under cultivation of every kind, and 8498 souls—being scarcely an acre and a quarter to each individual. Yet in no part of the world is such general comfort conspicuous among the people—an example, among the many others which history affords, of the great truth, that it is vice or oppression which induces a miserable population,¹ and that no danger is to be

¹ Coxe's
Switzer-
land with
Raymond's
Notes, i. 106.
Baron de
Stael. Ali-
son on Po-
pulation, ii.
3, 64.

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33.
Equity and
beneficial
effects of
the former
Swiss gov-
ernment.

apprehended from the greatest increase in the numbers of mankind, if they are justly governed and influenced by virtuous habits.

Of all the European governments, Switzerland was the one the weight of which was least felt by the people. Economy, justice, and moderation, were the basis of its administration, and the federal union by which the different cantons of which it was composed were held together, seemed to have no other object than to secure their common independence. Taxes were almost unknown, property was perfectly secure, and the expenses of government were incredibly small. The military strength of the state consisted in the militia of the different cantons, which, though formidable, if united and led by chiefs well skilled in the difficult art of mountain warfare, was little qualified to maintain a protracted struggle with the vast forces which the neighbouring powers had now brought into the field. The constitutions of the cantons were various. In some, as the Forest cantons, they were highly democratic; in others, as in Berne, essentially aristocratic: but in all, the great objects of government—security to persons and property, freedom in life and religion—were attained, and the aspect of the population exhibited a degree of wellbeing unparalleled in any other part of the world. The traveller was never weary of admiring,—on the sunny margin of the lake of Zurich, on the vine-clad hills of the Lemane sea, in the smiling fields of Appenzell, in the romantic valleys of Berne, and the lovely recesses of Unterwalden—the beautiful cottages, the property of their inhabitants, where industry had accumulated its fruits, and art often spread its elegancies, and virtue ever diffused its contentment; and where, amidst the savage magnificence of nature, a nearer approach appeared to have been made to the simplicity of the golden age than in any other quarter of the civilised globe.¹

¹ *Jom. x.*
293, 300.
Dum. i.
425, 428.
Personal
observation.

The physical resources of Switzerland, at this period,

were far from being considerable. The thirteen cantons into which the confederacy was then divided, contained in all but 1,347,000 inhabitants; and the contingents fixed in 1668, of soldiers to be furnished by each canton, amounted in all to only 9600 men. Now, since nine more cantons have been added by the treaties of 1814, the population is 2,188,000, and the contingents of armed men amount to 33,758 men. Even the largest of these numbers must appear Lilliputian beside the colossal armies of France and Germany, with which they were environed on all sides; and such as they were, they were not regular troops, but militia, which the state was bound only to make forthcoming in the event of a war. A reserve existed, however, of equal strength; and if invaded, Switzerland could even at that time bring 100,000 militia into the field. The public revenues of the whole confederacy now amount only to 14,000,000 francs, or £470,000 a-year, and in 1798 the thirteen cantons could not boast of more than £260,000. It was neither in its regular army nor its national income that the strength of the Swiss Confederacy was to be found, but in the strength of the country, the courage and hardihood of the people, their universal acquaintance with the use of arms, their unchangeable public spirit, and the halo of glory which centuries of victory had bequeathed to their arms.¹

For many ages the Swiss infantry was universally reckoned the first in Europe. They were, literally speaking, believed to be invincible. The victories of Morgarten, Laupen, and Naefels over the Austrians, and the still more marvellous triumphs of Granson, Morat, Nancy, and Vercelli, over Charles the Bold and the chivalry of France, had rendered it evident that they had discovered the secret of resisting with success even the most powerful cavalry of modern Europe, and that their serried columns, like the Macedonian phalanx, were impenetrable even to the steel-clad gendarmerie of the feudal barons. The ultimate suc-

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34.
Statistics of
the Swiss
cantons.1 Malte-
Brun, vii.
193. Coxe,
iii. 334, 335.

35.

Their great
military re-
putation.

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cess of Francis I. against these terrible bands on the bloody field of Marignan had scarcely weakened their reputation; for that could scarcely be called an overthrow, in which the victors had been brought into nearly as great straits as the vanquished, and which the royal conqueror himself had called a strife of giants, beside which all other battles were child's play. Subsequently they had been less heard of in the fields of European fame, partly because the Confederacy itself preserved a cautious neutrality, and the exploits of the mercenary bands which they lent out to all belligerent states were lost in the crowd of native soldiers among whom they served; partly because their loud, and often ill-timed, demands for their pay, rendered them an object of disquietude to those governments of Europe, so numerous in the last two centuries, whose thirst for conquest was stronger than their inclination or ability to remunerate the conquerors. But still their warlike spirit and prowess had not declined; they still maintained the character given of them by the Roman annalist—"Helvetii, Gallica gens, olim armis virisque, mox memoriâ nominis clara."* When brought into action, they had always evinced the steadiness and valour for which their ancestors had been so famous; and their recent glorious stand for the monarchy of Louis in the Place of the Carrousel, had demonstrated that, in the noblest of military virtues, fidelity to their colours in misfortune, they never had been surpassed by any troops in ancient or modern times.

36.
Ruinous
political
divisions
which at
that period
prevailed in
Switzer-
land.

Such, indeed, were the military resources of the Swiss, and the magnitude of their reputation, that it is more than doubtful whether, if they had been united among each other, they could have been subjugated even by the whole military power of France, at least without such a serious and protracted contest as would infallibly have brought the standards of Austria to their aid. But that which

* "The Helvetii, a Gallic race, formerly illustrious from their troops and arms, now from the memory of their exploits."—TACITUS, *Hist.* i. 67.

the French bayonets probably could not have effected, French propagandism had rendered of comparatively easy acquisition. Though the mountaineers, especially in the eastern parts of Switzerland, where the German language is spoken, were almost unanimously true to their country, and proof alike against the seductions and the illusions of French democracy, yet the case was different in the towns of the plains, and even in the rural districts, where French was the prevailing tongue, and the ideas which arise in cities had come to influence a large part of the people. They had been, ever since the commencement of the Revolution, the incessant object of French propagandism. Affiliated societies, Jacobin clubs, corresponding with that of the Jacobins at Paris, had been early established in almost all the principal towns of the level country; and as the spirit of the people in all those towns was essentially democratic, they found a ready reception in those heated enthusiasts.^{1*}

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¹ Hard. v.
276, 277.
Jom. x. 198,
200.

It was not the mere fumes of democracy which led the ardent spirits in the Swiss towns to embrace the cause of French propagandism. They had in view a deeper object, and proposed to themselves political and personal advantages of no small amount, by rendering French principles triumphant in their country. A republic, one and indivisible, on the model of that of France, was the object for which the democratic party in both countries incessantly strove; and they had clear views of personal aggrandisement in this attempt. The demagogues of Berne and Geneva at once perceived, that if this system

37.
Secret ob-
jects of the
Swiss democ-
rats in this
movement.

* The following is the population of the principal towns in Switzerland:—

Geneva,	26,000	Soleure,	4,000
Berne,	18,000	Neuchâtel,	5,000
Bâle,	17,000	Vevay,	4,500
Zurich,	11,500	Coire,	3,200
Lausanne,	10,200	Glarus,	4,000
St Gall,	9,000	Tusis,	3,000
Schaffhausen,	7,500	Lugano,	3,600
Herisau,	7,000	Yverdun,	2,500
Fribourg,	6,000	Sion,	3,000
Lucerne,	6,500	Appenzell,	3,200 ²

²Malte-Brun,
vii. 195.

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were established, and the rights of the separate cantons extinguished, the rude mountaineers of the Valais and the Oberland would be no match for them, and that all Switzerland would soon fall into the same subjection to its chief towns, which France had already done to Paris. The mountaineers were clear-sighted enough to see this danger; and for that reason they steadily resisted French principles, and resolutely held out for the old system of separate government in the different cantons, and a federal union. So firm was their resistance in many places, that, if the whole rural population had been equally clear upon it and united together, it is doubtful whether the French would ever have succeeded in subjugating the country.¹

¹ Hard. v.
274, 276.
Lac. xiv.
183.

38.
Inequality
of political
rights in the
different
cantons.

But, unhappily the rural cantons themselves laboured under a cause of weakness which paralysed their efforts, and enabled the French effectually to insert the point of the wedge even into many of the most unsophisticated of the mountain districts. This weakness, the sad bequest of the thirst for exclusive power in former times, consisted in the political subjection of some cantons and districts to others. The chief defect in the political constitution of the Helvetic Confederacy was, that, with the usual jealousy of the possessors of power, they had refused to admit the conquered provinces to a participation of the privileges which they themselves enjoyed, and thereby sown the seeds of future dissension and disaffection between the different parts of their dominions. In this way, the Pays de Vaud was politically subject to the canton of Berne, the Italian bailiwicks to that of Uri, and some towns of Argovia and Thurgovia to other cantons; while the peasants of Zurich, in addition to the absence of political privileges, were galled by a monopoly in the sale of their produce, which was justly complained of as oppressive. Yet the moderation and justice of the government of the senate of Berne were admitted even by its bitterest enemies; the economy of their administration had enabled them, with extremely light burdens, not only to meet all

the expenses of the state, but to accumulate a large treasure for future emergencies; and the practical blessings of their rule were unequivocally demonstrated by the wellbeing of the peasantry and the density of the population—features rarely found in unison, and which cannot coexist but under a paternal and beneficent system of administration.¹

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¹ Hard. v.
277. Lac.
xiv. 181.
Jom. x.
295.

The uniform system of the French revolutionary government, when they wished to make themselves masters of any country, was to excite a part of the population, by the prospect of the extension of political power, against the other; to awaken democratic ambition by the offer of fraternal support. Having thus distracted the state by the intestine divisions of its parties, they soon found it an easy matter to triumph over both. The situation of the Swiss cantons, some of which held conquered provinces in subjection, and which varied extremely among each other in the extent to which the elective franchise was diffused through the people, offered a favourable prospect of undermining the patriotism of the inhabitants, and accomplishing the subjection of the whole by the adoption of this insidious system. The treasure of Berne, which really amounted to 20,000,000 francs, (£800,000,) but of which report had magnified the amount, offered an irresistible bait to the cupidity of the French Directory; and whatever arguments were adduced in favour of respecting the neutrality of that asylum of freedom, they were always met by the consideration of the immense relief which those accumulated savings of three centuries would afford to the finances of the republic.²

39.
The French
resolve to
excite one
part of the
inhabitants
against the
other.

² Lac. xiv.
183.

The first spark of the revolutionary flame had been lighted in Switzerland in 1791, when many sincere and enthusiastic men, among whom was Colonel Laharpe, formerly preceptor to the Emperor Alexander, contributed by their publications to the growth of democratic principles. The patricians of Berne were the especial object of their attacks, and numerous had been the efforts made

40.
First origin
of the revo-
lutionary
passion in
Switzer-
land.

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to induce the inhabitants of its territory to shake off the aristocratic yoke. But the success of their endeavours was for many years prevented by the catastrophe of 10th August, and the savage ferocity with which the Swiss guard were treated by the Parisian populace on that occasion, for no other crime than unshaken fidelity to their duty and their oaths. Barthélemy was sent to Berne as ambassador of France in September 1792, to counteract this tendency; and his efforts and address were not without success in allaying the general exasperation, and reviving those feelings of discontent which, in an especial manner, existed among the inhabitants of the subject cantons. The government, however, persisted in a cautious system of neutrality—the wisest course which they could possibly have adopted, if supported by such a force as to cause it to be respected; but the most unfortunate when accompanied, as it was, by no military preparations to meet the coming danger.¹

¹ Hard. v.
277, 285.

41.
Its rapid
growth in
the large
towns.

The Swiss democrats formed a considerable party, formidable chiefly from their influence being concentrated in the great towns, where the powers of thought were more active, and the means of communication greater than in the rural districts. Zurich was the centre of their intrigues; and it was the great object of the revolutionists to counterbalance, by the influence of that city, the authority of Berne, at the head of which was Steiger, the chief magistrate of the confederacy. Ochs, grand tribune of Bâle, a turbulent and ambitious demagogue, Pfeffir, son of one of the chief magistrates of Lucerne, and Colonel Weiss at Berne, formed a secret committee, the object of which was, by all possible means to bring about the downfall of the existing constitution, and the ascendancy of French influence in the whole confederacy. Their united efforts occasioned an explosion at Geneva in 1792, and threatened the liberties of all Switzerland; but the firmness of the government of Berne averted the danger:² fourteen thousand militia speedily approached

² Hard. v.
282, 290.
Ante, c. x.
§ 60, 61.

the menaced point; and the troops of the Convention retired before a nation determined to assert its independence.

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The subjugation of Switzerland, however, continued a favourite object of French ambition; it had been resolved on by the Directory long before the treaty of Campo Formio. In July 1797, their envoy Mengaud was despatched to Berne to insist upon the dismissal of the English resident Wickham, and at the same time to set on foot intrigues with the democratic party, similar to those which had proved so successful in effecting the overthrow of the Venetian republic. By the prudent resolution of the English government, who were desirous not to embroil the Helvetic Confederacy with their formidable neighbours, Wickham was withdrawn. Foiled in this attempt to involve the Swiss in a conflict, the Directory next ordered their troops on the frontier to take possession of that part of the territory of Bâle which was subject to the jurisdiction of the cantons; but here too they were unsuccessful, for the Swiss government confined themselves to simple negotiations for so glaring a violation of existing treaties. But Napoleon, by his conduct in regard to the Valteline, struck a chord which soon vibrated with fatal effect throughout Switzerland, and, by rousing the spirit of democracy, prepared the subjugation of the country.¹

42.
Their measures to bring on a contest with the Swiss Diet.

¹ *Jom. x.*
302. Hard.
v. 290, 302.

The country, consisting of five bailiwicks, and containing one hundred and sixty thousand souls, extending from the source of the Adda to its junction with the lake of Como, had been conquered by the Grisons from the dukes of Milan. Francis I. guaranteed to its inhabitants the enjoyment of their liberties; and it had been governed with justice and moderation, by a council of its own, for three centuries. Napoleon, however, perceived in the situation of this sequestered valley the means of beginning the disruption of the Helvetic Confederacy. Its proximity to the Milanese territory, where the revolutionary spirit

43.
Napoleon at length succeeds in exciting a flame.

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Oct. 10,
1797.
1 Nap. iv.
196, 200,
202. Jom.
x. 203, 202,
263. Ann.
Reg. 1798,
22. Hard.
v. 302, 307.

44.
Powerful
effect which
his mea-
sures pro-
duce in the
subject
cantons.

June 21.

2 Corresp.
Conf. June
13, and July
21. 1797.
Hard. v. 295,
298.

was then furiously raging, and the common language which they spoke, rendered it probable that its inhabitants would rapidly imbibe the spirit of revolt against their German superiors; and, in order to sound their intentions, and foment the desire of independence, he, early in the summer of 1797, sent his aide-de-camp Leclerc to their cottages. The result was, that the inhabitants of the Valteline openly claimed their independence, rose in insurrection, hoisted the tricolor flag, and expelled the Swiss authorities. Napoleon, chosen during the plenitude of his power at Montebello as mediator between the contending parties, pronounced, on 10th October 1797, a decree which, instead of settling the disputed points between them, annexed the whole insurgent territory to the Cisalpine Republic, thereby bereaving the ancient allies of France, during a time of profound peace, of a territory to them of great value, which they had enjoyed for three hundred years. This decree was professedly based on the principle of still more general application, "That no one people should be subjected to another people;"* a principle which sounded somewhat strange in the mouth of the general of the great and ruling Republic.¹

This iniquitous proceeding, which openly encouraged every subject district in the Swiss Confederacy to declare its independence, was not lost upon the Valais, the Pays-de-Vaud, and all the other dependencies of the Republic. To increase the excitement, a large body of troops, under General Menard, was moved forward to the frontiers of these discontented provinces; and Napoleon, in his journey from Milan to Rastadt, took care to pass through those

* Napoleon at the same time dispatched an agent to negotiate with the republic of the Valais for a communication over the Simplon, through their territory, with the Cisalpine Republic. The Swiss government, however, had influence enough, by means of Barthélemy, who at that period was a member of the Directory, to obtain a negative on that attempt. The French general, upon this, had recourse to the usual engine of revolution; he stirred up, by his secret emissaries, the lower Valaisans to revolt against the upper Valaisans, by whom they were held in subjection; and the inhabitants, assured of his support, and encouraged by the successful result of the revolt of the Valteline, declared their independence.²

districts, and stop in those towns where the democratic spirit was known to be most violent. At Lausanne he was surrounded by the most ardent of the revolutionary party, and openly proclaimed as the restorer of their independence. A plan of operations was soon concerted with Ochs and Laharpe, the leaders of the new projects in that country. It was agreed that a republic, one and indivisible, should be erected, as that was considered more favourable to the interests of France, and the leading democrats in the towns, than the present federal union: that the Directory should commence by taking possession of Bienne, Erguel, and Munsterthal, which were dependencies of the bishopric of Bâle: that all the Italian bailiwicks should be stimulated to follow the example of the Pays-de-Vaud in throwing off the yoke of the other cantons: that the French Republic should declare itself the protector of all the districts and individuals who were disposed to shake off the authority of the aristocratic cantons, and that Mengaud should encourage the formation of clubs, inundate the country with revolutionary writings, and promise speedy succours in men and money. At Berne, Napoleon asked a question of sinister import, as to the *amount of its treasure*; and though the senator to whom it was addressed prudently reduced its amount to 10,000,000 francs, or £400,000, this was sufficient to induce that ambitious man, who was intent on procuring funds for his Eastern expedition, to urge the Directory to prosecute their invasion of Switzerland.¹

¹ Jom. x.
292, 298.
Lac. xiv.
195. De
Stael, ii. 209.
Ann. Reg.
1798, 24, 25.

The first act of open hostility against the Helvetic league was the seizure of the country of Erguel by five battalions, drawn from the army of the Rhine, on the 15th December. This event, accompanied as it was by an alarming fermentation, and soon an open insurrection in the Pays-de-Vaud, produced the utmost consternation in Switzerland; and a diet assembled at Arau to deliberate concerning the public exigencies. This act of hosti-

45.
First open
acts of hos-
tility.
Dec. 15.

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Dec. 17,
1797.

lity was followed, two days after, by an intimation from Mengaud, the French envoy, "that the members of the governments of Berne and Fribourg should answer personally for the safety of the persons and property of such of the inhabitants of the Pays-de-Vaud as might address themselves to the French Republic to obtain the restitution of their rights." As the senate of Berne seemed resolved to defend their country, Mengaud, early in January, summoned them instantly to declare their intentions. At the same time, General Menard crossed Savoy with ten thousand men, from the army of Italy, and established his headquarters at Ferney, near Geneva; while Monnier, who commanded the troops in the Cisalpine Republic, advanced to the frontiers of the Italian bailiwicks, to support the expected insurrection on the southern side of the Alps. These threatening measures brought matters to a crisis in the Pays-de-Vaud; the standard of insurrection was openly hoisted, trees of liberty were planted, the Swiss authorities expelled, and the "*Leman Republic*" was solemnly recognised by the French Directory.¹

Jan. 4, 1798.
1 Ann. Reg.
1798, 22, 23.
Jom. x. 302.
Lac. xiv.
195.

46.
This is all
done under
the direc-
tion of Na-
poleon.

These iniquitous measures against the Swiss Confederacy were all adopted by the government, with the concurrence and by the advice of Napoleon. He was the great centre of correspondence with the malcontents of Helvetia; and by his counsel, assistance, and directions, was kept alive that spirit of disaffection which ultimately proved fatal to the independence of the confederacy. In concert, at Paris, with Laharpe, Ochs, and the other leaders of the insurrection, he prepared a general plan of a revolt against the Swiss government. So little did the Directory deem it necessary to conceal either their own or his share in these intrigues, that they openly avowed it. In a journal published under their immediate superintendence, it was publicly declared that, with the assistance of Napoleon, they were engaged in a general plan for the remodelling the Helvetic constitution;² and that they took under their especial protection the patriots of

² Hard. v.
310, 311.

the Pays-de-Vaud, and all who were engaged in the great struggle for equality of privileges and French fraternisation throughout the whole of Switzerland.*

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These violent steps, which threatened the whole confederacy with dissolution, excited the deepest alarm in the Swiss Diet, assembled at Arau. This was increased by a note addressed by Mengaud, which declared that, if the Austrians entered the Grisons, the French would immediately occupy the canton of Berne. The most violent debates, meantime, took place in the senate of that canton, as to the course which should be adopted. In order to appease the public discontents, they passed a decree by which the principal towns and districts in the canton were empowered to elect fifty deputies to sit in the legislature. This example was immediately followed by the cantons of Zurich, Fribourg, Luzern, Soleure, and Schaffhausen. But this measure met with the usual fate of all concessions yielded, under the influence of fear, to revolutionary ambition; it displayed weakness without evincing firmness, and encouraged audacity without awakening gratitude.¹

47.
Consternation in consequence excited in Switzerland. They make some concessions.

20th Jan.

¹ Ann. Reg.
26. Jan.
x. 304, 308.
Th. x. 46.

* In the *Ami des Lois*, a journal entirely under the direction of Barras, there appeared at this period the following article: "Several French travellers have been sent within these few days to Switzerland, with instructions to observe the singular variety in the Helvetic governments, their division into thirteen republics, and their distribution into sovereign and subject states. The same travellers are directed to consider the inconveniences likely to arise from the accumulation, so near the French frontiers, of the leaders of so many parties who have been vanquished in the different crises of the Revolution. They are authorised to declare that France is particularly the ally of all the conquered or subject people, and of all who are in a state of opposition to their governments, all of which are notoriously sold to England. They are directed, in an especial manner, to observe the situation of Geneva, which is eminently republican, and friendly to France. M. Talleyrand is much occupied with the political state of Switzerland; he has frequent conferences with General Buonaparte, Colonel Laharpe, and the Grand Tribune Ochs. The latter distinguished character, who is received at all the public fêtes on the same terms as the foreign ambassadors, is occupied, under the auspices of the Directory, and in concert with the persons whom they have appointed to share their labours, with a general remodelling of the ancient Helvetic constitution. In a word, a revolutionary explosion is hourly expected on the two extremities of Switzerland, in the Grisons and the Pays-de-Vaud."—*Ami des Lois*, 11th Dec. 1797.

The direction which Napoleon took of these intrigues is abundantly proved by his *Confidential Correspondence*. On December 12, 1797, Ochs addressed the

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48.

Hostilities
commence
in the Pays
de Vaud.

Convinced at length by the eloquence of Steiger, that resistance was the only course which remained, the senate of Berne ordered the militia, twenty thousand strong, to be called out, and sent Colonel Weiss, with a small force, to take possession of Lausanne. But this officer had not troops sufficient to accomplish the object; the insurgents instantly invited General Menard to enter the territory of the confederacy, and the French battalions quickly poured down from the Jura. Upon his approach, the revolution broke out at Lausanne; the Swiss from Berne were driven out, and Menard, advancing, summoned Weiss instantly and entirely to evacuate the Pays-de-Vaud. Two soldiers of the escort of the flag of truce were killed; and although the senate of Berne offered to deliver up the men who had committed this aggression, Menard obstinately insisted upon construing it into a declaration of war, and established his headquarters at Lausanne. Meanwhile Ochs and Mengaud, the leaders of the democratic party, succeeded in revolutionising all the plain or northern part of Switzerland, as far as the foot of the mountains;¹ the ter-

27th Jan.

¹ Jom. x.

305, 306.

Lac. xiv.

200. Th.

x. 47, 49.

Ann. Reg.

26.

following note to that general: "The material points to consider are, whether we are to continue the federal union which is so agreeable to Austria, or establish unity, the only means of rendering Switzerland the permanent ally of France. I perceive, with the highest satisfaction, that you agree with the Swiss patriots on this point. But the result of our conferences and correspondence is, that it is indispensable that we should have a convention, supported by a French *corps d'armée* in the immediate neighbourhood. May I therefore be permitted to insinuate to my friends, in guarded phrases, that they will be supported? May I assure the patriots of Zurich, that the amnesty demanded will be extended to the inhabitants of Kaiffa; that France will make good its incontestible rights to the Val Moutier, the Val d'Erugel, and the town of Bienne; that she will guarantee the liberties of the Pays-de-Vaud, and that the Italian bailiwicks may present petitions, and fraternise with the Cisalpine republic? Bâle revolutionised might propose to the Italian bailiwicks, the Pays-de-Vaud, and the other subject states, to send deputies to a national convention; if matters were only brought that length, there can be no doubt that the remainder of Switzerland would come into their measures. But it is indispensable that the agents of France should publish revolutionary writings, and declare everywhere that you take under your especial protection all who labour for the regeneration of their country. This declaration, however, may be made either publicly or confidentially; I shall be happy to prepare a sketch of such a confidential letter, if you prefer that method."²

² Corresp.
Comp. iv. 470,
472.

It would appear that Napoleon had not at once replied to this letter: for, six days afterwards, Ochs again wrote to him: "I wrote to you on the 12th,

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ritories of Zurich, Bâle, and Argovie, quickly hoisted the tricolor flag, and convulsions took place in the Lower Valais, Fribourg, Soleure, and St-Gall. To such a height of audacity did the insurgents arrive, that they hoisted that emblem of revolution at Arau, without the Diet being able to overawe them by their presence, or prevent them by their authority.

49.
Resolute
conduct of
the Senate
of Berne.

Driven to desperation by these insurrections, the senate of Berne tardily, but resolutely, resolved upon resistance. They intimated to the French government the concessions made to the popular party; but the Directory declared that nothing would be deemed satisfactory unless the whole ancient constitution was overturned, and a provisional government of five revolutionists established in its stead. The senate, finding their ruin resolved on, issued a proclamation calling on the shepherds of the Alps to defend their country; Steiger repaired in person to the army to put himself under the orders of d'Erlach, and the most energetic measures to repel the danger were adopted. A minority, unworthy of the name of Swiss, abdicated,

and begged to know to which of the alternatives proposed in my letter the patriots are to look. Meanwhile, they are preparing, but I am much afraid they will do more harm than good; they will probably effect a half revolution only, which will be speedily overturned, and leave matters worse than before."¹ On the 2d December, Bacher, the revolutionary agent for the Grisons, wrote to Napoleon; "The explosion which we have so long expected has at length taken place; the chiefs and members of the Grey league have been deposed, and placed in confinement at Coire; the general assembly of the people has been convoked. Their first act has been to send a deputation to express to you, citizen-general, the profound sense which the Congress entertain of your powerful mediation, and to give you all the information which you can desire."² On the 21st December, Ochs wrote to Napoleon: "My letters have at length informed me, that the French troops are in possession of the bishopric of Bâle. I am transported with joy on the occasion; the last hour of the aristocracy appears to have struck. Listen to what one of your agents writes to me: 'Have only a little patience, and full justice will be done; war will be waged with the oligarchy and the aristocracy; government established in its primitive simplicity, universal equality will prevail, and then France will indeed live on terms of amity with its Swiss neighbours.'"³ On the 17th February 1798, the revolutionary deputies of the Pays-de-Vaud presented the following address to Napoleon: "The deputies of the Pays-de-Vaud, whom the generous protection of the Directory has so powerfully aided, desire to lay their homage at your feet. They owe it the more, because it was your passage through their country which electrified the inhabitants, and was the precursor of the thunderbolt

19th Dec.
1797.

¹ Ibid. iv. 474,
475.
2d Dec.

² Ibid. iv. 463,
21st Dec.

³ Corresp.
Conf. iv. 476.
477, 17th Feb.
1798.

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and agreed to all the propositions of the French general; not intimidated by the terror of the Republican arms, but deluded by the contagion of its principles. Desirous still, if possible, to avoid proceeding to extremities, the senate addressed a note to the Directory, in which they complained of the irruption of the French into the Pays-de-Vaud, and offered to disband their militia if the invaders were withdrawn. This drew forth from the enemy a full statement of their designs. No longer pretending to confine themselves to the support of the districts in a state of revolution, or the securing for them the privileges of citizens, they insisted on overturning the whole constitution of the country, forming twenty-two cantons instead of thirteen, and creating a republic, one and indivisible, with a Directory, formed in all respects on the model of that of France. At the same time, Mengaud published at Arau a declaration, that "all Swiss who should refuse to obey the commands, or follow the standards of the senate of Berne, would be taken under the immediate protection of the French Republic."¹

But the Swiss, on their side, were not idle. The

which has overwhelmed the oligarchy. The Helvetians swore, when they beheld the Liberator of Italy, to recover their rights."² Brune also corresponded with Napoleon during the whole campaign in Switzerland. In one of his letters, on 17th March 1798, he says, "I have studied your political conduct throughout your Italian campaign; I follow your labours to the best of my ability; according to your advice, I spare no methods of conciliation: but at the same time am fully prepared to act with force, and the genius of liberty has seconded my enterprises. I am, like you, surrounded by rascals: I am

¹ Jom. x.
308, 310.
Hard. v.
318, 319,
343. Lac.
xiv. 201.

² Ibid. iv. 498.
March 17.

³ Ibid. iv. 533.
5th Feb.

constantly paring their nails, and *taking the public treasures from them*."³ Lastly, Napoleon no sooner heard of the invasion of the Pays-de-Vaud, than he wrote to the Directors of the Cisalpine republic in these terms: "The Pays-de-Vaud and the different cantons of Switzerland are animated with the same spirit of liberty: we know that the Italian bailiwicks share in the same disposition; but we deem it indispensable that at this moment they should declare their sentiments, and manifest a desire to be united to the Cisalpine republic. We desire in consequence that you will avail yourselves of all the means in your power to spread in your neighbourhood the spirit of liberty; circulate liberal writings; and excite a movement *which may accelerate the general revolution of Switzerland*. We have given orders to General Monnier to approach the frontiers of the Italian bailiwicks with his troops, to support any movements of the insurgents; he has received orders to concert measures with you for the attainment of an object equally important to both republics." — See HARD. v. 230.

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50.

Heroic conduct of the mountain-
eers.

glorious example of their ancestors was emulated by the simple inhabitants of the mountain districts. The Oberland *en masse* flew to arms; the shepherds descended from the edges of their glaciers; every valley mustered its little band of men; and the accumulated streams, uniting like the torrents of the Alps, formed a body of nearly twenty thousand combatants on the frontiers of Berne. The small cantons followed the glorious example; Uri, Unterwalden, Schwytz, and Soleure, sent forth their contingents with alacrity; the inmost recesses of the Alps teemed with warlike activity, and the peasants joyfully set out from their cottages, not doubting that the triumphs of Morat, Laupen, and Granson, were about to be renewed in the holy war of independence. The women fanned the generous flame: they not only encouraged their husbands and brothers to swell the bands of their countrymen, but themselves in many instances joined the ranks, resolved to share in the perils and glories of the strife. Almost everywhere the inhabitants of the mountains remained faithful to their country; the citizens of the towns and plains alone were deluded by the fanaticism of revolution.¹

1 De Stael,
ii. 72. Lac.
xiv. 202,
203. Jom.
x. 310.
Ann. Reg.
28. Hard.
v. 321, 322.

General d'Erlach, who commanded the Swiss troops, had formed his army into three divisions, consisting of about seven thousand men each. The first, under General Andermatt, occupied the space between Fribourg and the classic shores of the Lake of Morat; the second, under Graffenried, was encamped between the town of Buren and the bridge over the river Thiels; the third, under Colonel Watteville, was in communication with the preceding, and covered Soleure. Had the Swiss army instantly attacked, they might possibly have overwhelmed the two divisions of the French troops, which were so far separated as to be incapable of supporting each other; the multitude of waverers in Switzerland would probably have been decided, by such an event, to join the armies of their country; and thus the confederacy might have

51.
Commence-
ment of hos-
tilities.

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been enabled to maintain its ground till the distant armies of Austria advanced to its relief. But, from a dread of precipitating hostilities while yet accommodation was practicable, this opportunity, notwithstanding the most urgent representations of Steiger, was allowed to escape, and General Brune, who at this time replaced Menard in the command, instantly concentrated his forces, and sent forward an envoy to Berne to propose terms of accommodation. By this artifice he both induced the enemy to relax their efforts, and gained time to complete his own preparations. The senate meanwhile fluctuated between the enthusiasm of the peasantry to resist the enemy, and their well-founded apprehensions of engaging in such a contest. At length Brune, having completed his preparations, declared that nothing would satisfy the Directory but the immediate disbanding of the whole army; upon which the senate at length authorised d'Erlach to commence hostilities, and notice was sent to the French commander that the armistice would not be renewed.¹ *

¹ Jom. x.
312, 315.
Ann. Reg.
23, 28.
Hard. v.
359, 375.

52.
Surrender
of Soleure
and Fri-
bourg.
March 2.

The French general, however, resolved to anticipate the enemy. For this purpose, the troops were moved before daybreak on the 2d March towards Soleure and Fribourg, where they had many partisans among the revolutionary classes. A battalion of Swiss, after a heroic resistance, was cut to pieces at the advanced posts; the mountaineers everywhere evinced the utmost resolution; but the towns were far from imitating this gallant example. Soleure surrendered at the first summons, and Fribourg, after a show of resistance, did the same. These great successes, gained evidently by concert with the party who distracted

* The ultimatum of the French general was in these terms:—"The government of Berne is to recall the troops which it has sent into the other cantons, and disband its militia. There shall forthwith be established a provisional government, differing in form and composition from the one which exists; within a month after the establishment of that provisional government, the primary assemblies shall be convoked; the principle of political liberty and equality of rights assumed as the base of the new constitution, and declared the fundamental law of the confederacy; all persons detained for political offences shall be set at liberty. The senate of Berne shall instantly resign its authority into the hands of the provisional government."—HARD. v. 375, 376.

Switzerland, not only gave the invaders a secure bridge over the Aar, but, by uncovering the right of the Swiss army, compelled the retreat of the whole. This retrograde movement, immediately following these treacherous surrenders, produced the most fatal effect. The peasants conceived they were betrayed: some disbanded and retired, boiling with rage, to their mountains; others mutinied and murdered their officers; nothing but the efforts of Steiger and d'Erlach brought any part of the troops back to their colours, and then it was discovered that half their number had disappeared during the confusion. This unlooked-for piece of good fortune was ably taken advantage of by the French general. While the Swiss troops, at this critical moment, were undergoing so ruinous a diminution, the French were vigorously following up their successes. Before daybreak on the 5th, a general attack was commenced on the Helvetic position. General Pigeon, with fifteen thousand men, passed the Sarine, and by a sudden assault made himself master of the post of Neueneck, on the left of the army; but the Swiss, though only eight thousand strong, under Graffenried, having returned to the charge, after a desperate conflict drove his veteran bands back, with the loss of eighteen pieces of cannon, and two thousand men, and amidst loud shouts regained the position they had occupied in the morning.¹

¹ Jom. x.
317, 318.
Lac. xiv.
203, 204.
Ann. Reg.
29.

But while fortune thus smiled on the arms of freedom on the left, a fatal disaster occurred on the right. After the fall of Soleure, the division of Schawembourg moved forward on the road to Berne, and, after an obstinate struggle, dislodged the Swiss advanced guard of four thousand men placed in the village of Frauenbrunnen. After this success, he pushed on till his advance was arrested by the corps commanded by d'Erlach in person, seven thousand strong, posted with its right resting on a ridge of rocks, and its left on marshes and woods. But the strength of this position, where formerly the Swiss had triumphed over the Sire of Coucy, proved inadequate to arrest the

53.
Bloody battle before
Berne.

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immense force which now assailed it. The great superiority of the French, who had no less than sixteen thousand veteran troops in the field, enabled them to scale the rocks and turn his right, while dense battalions, supported by a numerous artillery, pressed upon the centre and left. After a brave resistance, the Swiss were forced to retreat; but they did so in the most leisurely and regular manner. In the course of it, they made a heroic stand at Granholz. The extraordinary nature of the war there appeared in the strongest colours. The mountaineers, though defeated, faced about with the utmost resolution; old men, women, children, joined their ranks; the place of the dead and the wounded was instantly supplied by crowds of every age and sex, who rushed forward with inextinguishable devotion to the scene of danger. At length the numbers and discipline of the French prevailed over the undaunted resolution of their opponents; the motley crowd was borne backwards at the point of the bayonet to the heights in front of Berne. Here d'Erlach renewed the combat for the fifth time that day, and for a while arrested their progress; but the cannon and cavalry of the French having thrown his undisciplined troops into confusion, they were driven into the town, and the cannon of the ramparts alone prevented the victors from following in their steps. The city capitulated the same night, and the troops dispersed in every direction.^{1*}

Deplorable excesses followed the dissolution of the Swiss army. The cry of treachery, so commonly raised by the

¹ Jom. x.
319, 322.
Ann. Reg.
30, 31.
Lac. xiv.
205, 208.
Th. x. 50.

* During all these negotiations and combats with the republic of Berne, Brune corresponded confidentially with, and took directions from Napoleon. On the 8th February he wrote from Lausanne to him:—"Berne has made some flourishes before my arrival, but since that period it has been chiefly occupied with remodelling its constitution; anticipating thus the stroke which the Directory had prepared for it. To-morrow I shall advance to Morat, and from thence make you acquainted, my general, with our military and political situation." Three days afterwards he again wrote:—"The letter of citizen Mengaud, affixed to the coffee-houses of Berne, has awakened the oligarchs; their battalions are on foot; nothing less than the 12,000 men which you have demanded from the army of the Rhine for this expedition can insure its success. The presence of an armed force is indispensable."—*Corresp. Conf. de Nap.* iv. 511, 512; and *HARD.* v. 355, 356.

unfortunate, arose in their ranks. The brave d'Erlach was massacred by his deluded soldiers at Munzingen, as he was endeavouring to reach the small cantons. Steiger, after undergoing incredible hardships, escaped by the mountains of Oberland into Bavaria. Numbers of the bravest officers fell victims to the fury of the troops; and the democratic party, by spreading the belief that they had been betrayed by their leaders, occasioned the destruction of the few men who could have sustained the sinking fortunes of their country. The French, immediately after their entrance into Berne, made themselves masters of its treasure, the chief incentive to the war. Its exact amount was never ascertained, but the most moderate estimate made it 20,000,000 francs, or £800,000 sterling. The arsenal, containing 300 pieces of cannon, and 40,000 muskets, the stores, the archives, all became the prey of the victors. The tree of liberty was planted, the democratic constitution promulgated, and a Directory appointed. Several senators put themselves to death at beholding the destruction of their country; many died of grief at the sight.¹*

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54.
Dreadful
excesses of
the Swiss
after defeat.
Capture of
Berne and
its treasures.¹ *Jom. x.*
321, 323.
Lac. xiv.
208, 209.
Th. x. 51.
Hard. v.
391, 409.

The fall of Berne was soon followed by an explosion of the revolutionary volcano over great part of Switzerland. The people of Zurich and Luzern rose in open insurrection, dispossessed the authorities, and hoisted the tricolor flag; the Lower Valaisans revolted against the Upper, and by the aid of the French, made themselves masters of the castellated cliffs of Sion. Almost all the level parts of Switzerland joined the innovating party. They were not long in tasting the bitter fruits of such conduct. Enormous contributions, pillage of every sort, attended the steps of the French armies; even the

55.
Enormous
contributions
levied
by the
French
everywhere.

* Brune announced the capture of Berne to Napoleon in these terms:—"From the moment that I found myself in a situation to act, I assembled all my strength to strike like lightning; for Switzerland is a vast barrack, and I had everything to fear from a war of posts. I avoided it by negotiations, which I knew were not sincere on the part of the Bernese, and since that I have followed the plan which I traced out to you. I think always that I am still under your command."—*Corresp. Conf. iv. 531.*

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altar of Notre-Dame des Ermites, in the abbey of Einsiedeln, the object of peculiar veneration, was despoiled. The generals received prodigious gifts out of the plunder:* the troops were clothed at the expense of their democratic allies; and the scourge of commissaries, as in Belgium and Italy, following in the rear of the armies, exhibited, by the severity and enormity of their exactions, a painful contrast to the lenity and indulgence of their former government.† The Swiss revolutionists were horror-struck at these exactions, and all persons of respectable character, who had been misled by the frenzy of democracy, seeing that the independence of Switzerland was destroyed, threw up their employments in the service of the invaders, and lamented in silence the despotic yoke they had brought on their country.‡

1 Jom. x.
323, 330.
348, 349.
Lac. xiv.
210, 211.
Th. x. 53.

56.
New constitution of
Switzerland.
April 12.

A new constitution was speedily framed for the confederacy, formed on the basis of that established in France in 1795, which was proclaimed at Arau on 12th April. The barriers of nature, the divisions formed by

* That of General Brune amounted to 800,000 francs, or £32,000 sterling.—LACRETELLE, xiv. 210.

† The French imposed a tax of 15,000,000 francs, or £600,000, on their democratic "allies" in Berne, Fribourg, Soleure, Luzern, and Zurich—a sum far greater than ever had been raised before in those simple countries in ten years. This was independent of 19,000,000 francs, or £760,000, already paid by those cantons in bills of exchange and cash, and of 5,000,000 francs, or £200,000 worth of articles taken from the arsenals. Such were the first fruits of republican fraternisation.

‡ The total plunder exacted from the canton of Berne alone by the French, in 1798, amounted to the enormous sum of 42,280,000 francs, or nearly £1,700,000. The particulars are given by Hardenberg as follows:—

	Francs.
Treasure,	7,000,000
Ingots,	3,700,000
Contributions,	4,000,000
Sale of tithes,	2,000,000
Wheat seized,	17,140,000
Wine,	1,440,000
Artillery and stores in arsenal,	7,000,000

Total, 42,280,000 francs, or £1,688,000.—See JOMINI, *Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution*, x. 336-330; and HARDENBERG, *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, vi. 180, 181.

mountains, lakes, and torrents; the varieties of character, occupation, language, and descent, were disregarded, and the republic, one and indivisible, was proclaimed. Five directors, entirely in the interest of France, were appointed, with the absolute disposal of the executive and military power of the state; and by a law, worthy of Tiberius, whoever *spoke even* in a disrespectful manner of the new authorities was punishable with death. Geneva at the same time fell a prey to the ambition of the all-engrossing Republic. This celebrated city had long been an object of their desire; and the divisions by which it was now distracted afforded a favourable opportunity for accomplishing the object. The democratic party loudly demanded a union with that power, and a commission was appointed by the senate, to report upon the subject. Their report, however, was unfavourable; upon which General Gerard, who commanded a small corps in the neighbourhood, took possession of the town; and the senate, with the bayonet at their throats, formally agreed to a union with the conquering Republic.¹

¹ Jom. x.
330, 331.
Lac. xiv.
213.

But while the rich and populous part of Switzerland was thus falling a prey to the revolutionary fervour of the times, a more generous spirit animated the shepherds of the small cantons. The people in the mountain districts of Schwytz, Uri, Unterwalden, Glarus, Sargans, Turgovie, and St-Gall, rejected the new constitution. The inhabitants of these romantic and sequestered regions, communicating little with the rest of the world, ardently attached to their liberties, proud of their heroic struggles in defence of ancient freedom, and inheriting all the dauntless intrepidity of their forefathers, were not to be seduced by the glittering but deceitful offers which had deluded their richer and more civilised brethren. They clearly perceived that, when once they were merged in the Helvetic Union, their influence would be destroyed by the multitude who would share their privileges; that they themselves, rude and simple, would soon fall under

57.
Generous
efforts of
the moun-
taineers.

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the dominion of the cities, with whose wealth and ambition they were wholly disqualified to contend; and that, in the wreck of all their ancient institutions, the independence of their common country could not long be maintained. They saw that the insidious promises of the French envoys had terminated only in ruinous exactions and tyrannical rule, and that irreligion, sacrilege, and infidelity, universally marked the invaders' steps. Every day they had proofs of the repentance, when too late, of the cantons who had invited the enemy into their bosom; and multitudes, escaping from the theatre of French exactions, fled into their secluded valleys, stimulating their inhabitants to resistance by the recital of their oppressions, and offering to aid them with their arms. Animated by these feelings, the small cantons unanimously rejected the new constitution. "We have lived," said they, "for several centuries, under a republic based on liberty and equality: possessing no other goods in the world but our religion and our independence, no other riches but our herds, our first duty is to defend them."¹

¹ Jom. x.
326, 348,
349. Lac.
xiv, 216,
217.

58.
Arguments
by which
they were
roused by
the clergy.

The clergy in these valleys had unbounded influence over their flocks. They were justly horror-struck at the total irreligion which was manifested by the French armies in every part of the world, and the savage war which they waged in an especial manner against the Catholic faith. The priests traversed the ranks, with the crucifix in their hands, to exhort the peasants to die as martyrs, if they could not preserve the independence and religion of their country. "It is for you," they exclaimed, "to be faithful to the cause of God; you have received from Him gifts a thousand times more precious than gold or riches—the freedom and faith of your ancestors. A peril far more terrible than heresy now assails you; impiety itself is at your gates; the enemy marches covered with the spoils of your churches; you will no longer be the sons of William Tell if you abandon the faith of your fathers; you are now called on not only to combat as heroes, but to die as

martyrs." The women showed the same ardour as at Berne: numbers joined the ranks with their husbands; others carried provisions and ammunition for the combatants; all were engaged in the holy cause. The tricolor flag became the object of equal hatred with the Austrian standard five centuries before; the tree of liberty recalled the pole of Gesler; all the recollections of William Tell mingled with the new-born enthusiasm of the moment. "We do not fear," said the shepherds of Uri, with touching simplicity, "the armies of France; we are four hundred, and if that is not sufficient, four hundred more in our valley are ready to march to the defence of their country." Animated by such feelings, the peasants confidently hoped for victory; the spots on which the triumphs of Naefels, Laupen, and Morgarten were to be renewed, were already pointed out with exulting anticipations of success; and the shepherds of a few cantons, who could not bring ten thousand men into the field, fearlessly entered the lists with a power beneath which the Austrian monarchy had sunk to the ground.¹

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¹ De Stael,
Rév. Franç.
ii. 216. Lac.
xiv. 218,
219. Jom.
x. 349, 350.

Aloys Reding was the soul of the confederacy. Brave, active, and energetic, he inherited all the ardent spirit, and devoted enthusiasm, which in its best days had laid the foundation of Helvetic independence. Descended from the ancient founders of the republic, related to numbers who had perished on the Place du Carrousel on the 10th August, an old antagonist of the French in the Spanish war, he was filled with the strongest enmity at that grasping tyranny which, under the name of freedom, threatened to extinguish all the liberties of the civilised world. But he was not a mere enthusiast in the cause of freedom; he brought to its support military talents of a very high order, and a thorough practical acquaintance with modern warfare. His military knowledge and long experience made him fully aware of the perilous nature of the contest in which his countrymen were engaged, but he flattered himself that, amidst the precipices and woods of

^{59.}
Aloys Red-
ing.

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1798.

¹ Jom. x.
346. Lac.
xiv. 216.

the Alps, a Vendean war might be maintained till the German nations were roused to their relief; forgetting that a few valleys, whose whole population was not eighty thousand, could hardly hope for success in a contest in which three millions of Bretons and Vendéans had failed.¹

60.
First suc-
cesses and
ultimate dis-
asters of the
peasants.

The peasants were justly apprehensive of the war being carried into their own territories, as the ravages of the soldiers or the torch of the incendiary might destroy in a moment the work of centuries of labour. Reding, too, was in hopes that, by assailing the French troops when dispersed over a long line, he might gain a decisive success in the outset of the campaign; and accordingly it was determined to make an immediate attack on Luzern and Zurich. A body of four thousand men marched upon the former town, which surrendered by capitulation; and at it the Swiss got possession of a few pieces of cannon, which they made a good use of in the mountain warfare to which they were soon reduced. No sooner had they made themselves masters of the city, than, like the Vendéans, they flocked to the churches to return thanks to heaven for their success. Meanwhile two other columns threatened Zurich, the one from Rapperswyl, the other from Richtenswyl: but here they found that the French, now thoroughly alarmed, were advancing in great force; and that, abandoning all thoughts of offensive warfare, it was necessary to concentrate all their forces for the defence of their own valleys. In effect, Schawembourg, with one brigade, surprised three thousand peasants at Zug, and made them all prisoners; while General Nouvion, after a bloody conflict, won the passage of the Reuss at Mellingen. He then divided his men into two divisions, one of which, after an obstinate battle, drove the peasants back into Richtenswyl; while the other, after a desperate struggle, forced the column from Rapperswyl into the defile of Kusunacht.²

April 18.

April 30.

² Jom. x.
353, 356.
Lac. xiv.
221, 222.
³ Ann. Reg.
33.

After these disasters, the canton of Zug, which was now overrun by French troops, accepted the new constitution.

But Schwytz was still unsubdued; its little army of three thousand men resolved to defend their country, or perish in the attempt. They took post, under Reding, at MORGARTEN, already immortalised in the wars of Helvetic independence. At daybreak the French appeared, more than double their force, descending the hills to the attack. They instantly advanced to meet them, and, running across the plain, encountered their adversaries before they had come to the bottom of the slope. The shock was irresistible; the French were borne backwards to the summit of the ridge, and after a furious conflict, which lasted the whole day, the peasants remained masters of the contested ground. Fresh reinforcements came up on both sides during the night, and the struggle was renewed next day with doubtful success. The coolness and skill of the Swiss marksmen counterbalanced the immense superiority of force, and the greater experience and rapidity of movement, on the part of their adversaries; but, in spite of all their efforts, they were unable to gain a decisive success over the invaders. The rocks, the woods, the thickets, were bristling with armed men; every cottage became a post of defence, every meadow a scene of carnage, every stream was dyed with blood. Darkness put an end to the contest, while the mountaineers were still unsubdued; but they received intelligence during the night which rendered a longer continuance of the struggle hopeless.¹

The inhabitants of Uri and Unterwalden had been driven into their valleys; a French corps was rapidly marching in their rear upon Schwytz, where none but women remained to defend the passes; the auxiliaries of Sargans and Glarus had submitted to the invaders. Slowly and reluctantly the men of Schwytz were brought to yield to inexorable necessity: a resolution not to submit till two-thirds of the canton had fallen was at first carried by acclamation; but at length they yielded to the persuasions of an enlightened ecclesiastic and the brave Reding, who represented the hopelessness of any further contest, and

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61.

Heroic defence of the
Schwytzers
at Morgarten.
May 2.

May 3.

¹ *Jom. x.*
357, 358.
Lac. xiv.
224, 225.

62.

The disasters
of the Swiss
in other
quarters
force them
to retreat.

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¹ Jom. x.
357, 358.
Lac. xiv.
224, 226.

agreed to a convention, by which they were to accept the constitution, and be allowed to enjoy the use of their arms, their religion, and their property, and the French troops were to be withdrawn from their frontier. The other small cantons soon followed their example, and peace was for a time restored to that part of Switzerland.¹

63.
Bloody conflict in the
Valais.
Oppressive
conduct of
the French.

May 7.

The same checkered fortune attended the arms of the Swiss in the Valais. The brave inhabitants of the rocky, pine-clad mountains which guard the sources of the Rhone, descended from Leuk to Sion, whence they expelled the French garrison, and pursued them as far as St Maurice, near the Lake of Geneva. Here, however, they were assailed by a column of the Republicans, on their march to Italy, and driven back towards the Upper Valais. An obstinate conflict ensued at the bridge of la Marge, in front of Sion; twice the Republicans were repulsed; even the Cretins, seeming to have recovered their intellect amidst the animation of the affray, behaved with devoted courage. At length, however, the post was forced, and the town carried by escalade; the peasants, despairing of success, retired to their mountains, and the new constitution was proclaimed without opposition, amidst deserted and smoking ruins. A temporary breathing-time from hostilities followed these bloody defeats; but it was a period of bitter suffering and humiliation to Switzerland. Forty thousand men lived at free quarters upon the inhabitants; the requisitions for the pay, clothing, and equipment of these hard taskmasters proved a sad contrast to the illusions of hope which had seduced the patriotism of its urban population. The rapacity and exactions of the commissaries, and inferior authorities, exceeded even the cruel spoliation of the Directory; and the warmest supporters of the democratic party sighed when they beheld the treasures, the accumulation of ages, and the warlike stores, the provident savings of unsubdued generations, sent off, under a powerful guard, to France, never to return. In vain the revolutionary authorities of Switzer-

land, now alive to the tyranny they had brought on their country, protested against the spoliation, and affixed their seals to the treasures which were to be carried off; they were instantly broken by the French commissaries; and a proclamation of the Directory informed the inhabitants that they were a conquered nation, and must submit to the lot of the vanquished.¹*

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¹ Ann. Reg.
35, 36.
Jom. x. 360,
361.

All the public property, stores, and treasures of the cantons were soon declared prize by the French authorities, the liberty of the press was extinguished, a vexatious system of police introduced, and those magistrates who showed the slightest regard for the liberties of their country were dismissed without trial or investigation. The ardent democrats, who had joined the French party in the commencement of the troubles, were now the foremost to exclaim against their rapacity, and lament their own weakness in having ever lent an ear to their promises. But it was all in vain. More subservient Directors were placed by the French authorities at the head of affairs, in lieu of those who had resigned in disgust; and an alliance offensive and defensive was concluded at Paris between the two republics, which bound Switzerland to furnish a contingent of troops, and to submit to the formation of two military roads through the Alps, one to Italy, and one to Suabia—conditions which, as Jomini justly observes, were worse for Switzerland than an annexation to France, as they imposed upon it all the burdens and dangers of war, without either its advantages or its glories.²

64.
An alliance
offensive
and defensive
with
France is
forced upon
Switzer-
land.

Aug. 4.

² Jom. xi.
17, 18.
Hard. vi.
180, 182.

The discontents arising from these circumstances were accumulating on all sides, when the imposition of an oath

* The rapacity of the French commissaries, who followed in the rear of the armies, soon made the Swiss regret even the spoliations of Brune and their first conquerors. Lecarlier levied 100,000 crowns in Fribourg, and 800,000 francs in Berne; and as the public treasure was exhausted, the effects of 300 of the richest families were taken in payment, and the principal senators sent as prisoners to the citadel of Besançon till the contribution was paid. He was succeeded by Rapinat, whose exactions were still more intolerable. He levied a fresh contribution of 6,000,000 francs on Berne; on Zurich, Fribourg, and Soleure, of 7,000,000; 750,000 francs were taken from six abbeys alone.—HARD. vi. 180, 181.

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65.

Glorious
resistance
of Uri and
Schwytz.
Cruel mas-
sacre by the
French.

to the new constitution brought matters to a crisis in the small cantons. All took it with the utmost reluctance ; but the shepherds of Unterwalden unanimously declared they would rather perish ; and thither the most determined of the men of Schwytz and Uri flocked, to sell their lives dearly in defence of their country. But resistance was hopeless. Eight thousand French embarked at Luzern, and landed at Stanz, on the eastern side ; while the like number crossed the beech-clad ridge of the Brunig, and descended by the lovely lakes of Lungern and Sarnen, at the western extremity of the valley. Oppressed by such overwhelming forces, the peasants no longer hoped for success ; an honourable death was the only object of their wishes. In their despair they observed little design, and preserved hardly any discipline ; yet such is the force of mere native valour, that for several days it enabled three thousand shepherds to keep at bay above sixteen thousand of the bravest troops of France. Every hedge, every thicket, every cottage, was obstinately contested ; the dying crawled into the hottest of the fire ; the women and children threw themselves upon the enemy's bayonets ; the gray-haired raised their feeble hands against the invaders : but what could heroism and devotion achieve against such desperate odds ? Slowly, but steadily, the French columns forced their way through the valley, the flames of the houses, the massacre of the inhabitants, marking their steps. The beautiful village of Stanz, entirely built of wood, was soon consumed ; seventy peasants, with their curate at their head, perished in the flames of the church. Two hundred auxiliaries from Schwytz, arriving too late to prevent the massacre, rushed into the thickest of the fight ; and, after slaying double their own number of the enemy, perished to the last man. Night at length drew its veil over these scenes of horror ; but the fires from the burning villages still threw a lurid light over the cliffs of the Engelberg ;¹ and long after the rosy tint of evening had ceased to tinge the glaciers of

Sept. 9.

¹ Lac. xiv.
229, 230.
Ann. Reg.
34, 35. Jom.
xi. 19, 20.

the Titlis, the glare of the conflagration illuminated the summit of the mountain.

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These tragical events were little calculated to induce other states to follow the example of the Swiss in calling in the aid of the French democracy. The inhabitants of the Grisons, who had felt the shocks of the revolutionary earthquake, took counsel from the disasters of their brethren in the Forest Cantons, and invoking the aid of Austria, guaranteed by ancient treaties, succeeded in preserving their independence and ancient institutions. Seven thousand Imperialists entered Coire in the middle of October; and spreading through the valley of the Rhine, already occupied those posts which were destined to be the scene of such sanguinary conflicts in the succeeding campaign. The French, on their part, augmented rather than diminished the force with which they occupied Switzerland; and it was already apparent that, in the next conflict between these gigantic powers, the Alps would become the principal theatre of their strife.¹

66.
The Grisons
invoke the
aid of the
Austrians,
who occupy
their country.

Oct. 19.

¹ Jom. xi.
20, 22.

In this unprovoked attack upon Switzerland, the Directory committed as great a fault in political wisdom as in moral duty. The neutrality of that country was a better defence to France, on its south-eastern frontier, than either the Rhine or the iron barrier on its north-western. The Allies could never venture to violate the neutrality of the Helvetic Confederacy, lest they should throw its warlike population into the arms of France; no armies were required for that frontier, and the whole disposable forces of the state could be turned to the Rhine and the Maritime Alps. In offensive operations, the advantage was equally apparent. The French, possessing the line of the Rhine, with its numerous fortifications, had the best possible base for their operations in Germany; the fortresses of Piedmont gave them the same advantage in Italy; while the great mass of the Alps, occupied by a neutral power, rendered their conquests, pushed forward in either of these directions, secure from an attack in flank,

67.
Extreme
impolicy,
as well as
iniquity, of
the attack
on Switzerland.

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and preserved the invading army from all risk of being cut off from its resources. But when the Alps themselves became the theatre of conflict, these advantages were all lost to the Republic; the bulwark of the Rhine was liable to be rendered valueless at any time by a reverse in Switzerland, and France exposed to an invasion in the only quarter where her frontier is totally defenceless; while the fortifications of Mantua and the line of the Adige were of comparatively little importance, when they were liable to be turned by any inconsiderable success in the Grisons or the Italian bailiwicks. The Tyrol, besides, with its numerous, warlike, and enthusiastic population, afforded a base for mountain warfare, and a secure asylum in case of disaster, which the French could never expect to find amidst the foreign language and hostile feelings of German Switzerland; while, by extending the line of operations from the Adriatic to the Channel, the Republic was forced to defend an extent of frontier, for which even its resources, ample as they were, might be expected to prove insufficient.¹

¹ Arch. Ch.
i. 127, 140.
Jom. x. 286,
289.

68.
Great indignation excited by it in Europe.

Nothing ever done by the revolutionary government of France had so powerful an effect in cooling the ardour of its partisans in Europe, and opening the eyes of the intelligent and respectable classes in every other country as to their ultimate designs, as the attack on Switzerland.* As long as the Republic was contending with the armies of kings, or resisting the efforts of the aristocracy, it was alleged that it was only defending its own liberties, and that the whole monarchies of Europe were leagued together

* Its effect on the friends of freedom in England may be judged of from the following indignant lines by Coleridge, once an ardent supporter of the Revolution, in his noble Ode to France, written in 1797:—

“ Forgive me, Freedom ! oh, forgive those dreams !
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia’s icy caverns sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stain’d streams !
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perish’d,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain snows
With bleeding wounds, forgive me that I cherish’d
One thought that ever bless’d your cruel foes !

for its destruction. But when, in a moment of general peace, its rulers commenced an unprovoked attack on the Swiss Confederacy; when the loud declaimers in favour of popular rights forced an obnoxious constitution on the mountaineers of the Alps, and desolated with fire and sword the beautiful recesses of the democratic cantons; the sympathies of Europe were awakened in favour of a gallant and suffering people, and the native atrocity of the invasion called forth the wishes of freedom on the other side. The Whig leaders of England, with Mr Fox and Sir James Mackintosh at their head, who had palliated the atrocities of the Revolution longer than was consistent either with their own character or their interest as a political party, confessed that "the mask had fallen from the face of revolutionary France, if indeed it ever had worn it."¹ "Where," it was asked over all Europe, "will the Revolution stop? What country could be imagined less alluring to their cupidity than that, where, notwithstanding the industry of the inhabitants, the churlish soil will barely yield its children bread? What government can pretend to favour in the eyes of the Directory, when it visits with fire and sword those fields where the whole inhabitants of a canton assemble under the vault of heaven, to deliberate, like the Spartans of old, on their common concerns? What fidelity and proof of confidence does it expect more complete than that which leaves a whole frontier without defence, or rather which has hitherto considered it as better defended by the unalterable neutrality of its faithful allies,² than by the triple line

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¹ Parl. Deb.
xxxiv. 1323.² Dum. i.
428, 429.
Jom. x. 331.

To scatter rage and traitorous guilt,
Where peace her jealous home had built;
A patriot race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear.

* * *
O France! that mockest heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils,
Are these thy boasts, champion of human kind,
* * *

To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?"

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of fortresses which elsewhere guards the entrance to its soil?" *

1797.

69.
Commence-
ment of
measures to
revolution-
ise the Ro-
man States.

May 19,
1797.

May 25.

1 Hard. iv.
387, 388.

The Ecclesiastical States were the next object of attack. It had long been an avowed object of ambition with the Republican government to revolutionise Rome, and plant the tricolor flag in the city of Brutus. The resolution of Napoleon and the Directory to effect the overthrow of the Papal government, was adopted long before the treaty of Campo Formio. On the 12th February 1797, the Directory wrote to Napoleon,—“The possession of the Tyrol and Trieste, and the *conquest of Rome*, will be the glorious fruits of the fall of Mantua.” On the 19th May 1797, Napoleon wrote to the Directory,—“The Pope is dangerously ill, and is eighty-three years old. The moment I received this intelligence, I assembled all my Poles at Bologna, from whence I shall push them forward to Ancona. What shall I do if the Pope dies?” The Directory answered,—“The minister of foreign affairs will inform General Buonaparte, that they trust to his accustomed prudence to bring about a democratic revolution in the Roman states, with as little convulsion as possible.” The scheme, however, failed at that time, as the Pope recovered. Meanwhile the pillage of the Ecclesiastical States continued without intermission; and having exhausted the public treasury, and drained the country of all its specie, the French agents laid their rapacious hands upon all the jewels and precious stones they could find. The value of the plunder thus got was astonishing.†

* “The invasion and destruction of Switzerland,” says Sir James Mackintosh, “is an act in comparison with which all the deeds of rapine and blood perpetrated in the world are innocence itself. It was an unprovoked aggression against an innocent country, which had been the sanctuary of peace and liberty for three centuries; respected as a sacred territory by the fiercest ambition, raised like its own mountains beyond the reach of the storms which raged on every side; the only government that ever accumulated wealth without imposing taxes. An innocent treasure sustained by the tears of the poor, but which attested the virtue of a long series of magistrates, at length caught the eye of the spoiler, and became their ruin.”—Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH'S *Works*, iii. 293.

† “The Pope,” said Cacault, the French ambassador at Rome, to Napoleon,

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70.

Attack on
the Papal
States.
Miserable
state of the
Pope.

The situation of the Pope had thus become, since the French conquests in Italy, in the highest degree precarious. Cut off, by the Cisalpine republic, from any support from Austria; left by the treaty of Campo Formio entirely at the mercy of the French Republic; threatened by the heavings of the democratic spirit within his own dominions, and exposed to all the contagion arising from the complete establishment, and close vicinity, of republican governments in the north of Italy, he was almost destitute of the means of resisting so many seen and unseen enemies. The pontifical treasury was exhausted by the immense payments stipulated by the treaty of Tolentino, and the enormous subsequent contributions levied by the French generals; while the activity and zeal of the revolutionary clubs in all the principal towns of the Ecclesiastical States, was daily increasing with the prospect of success. To enable the government to meet the insatiable demands of the French army, the principal Roman families, like the Pope, had sold their gold, their silver, their jewels, their horses, their carriages, their finest pictures, in a word, all their valuable effects; but the exactions of the Republican agents were still unabated. In despair, they had recourse to the fatal expedient of issuing a paper circulation, bearing a forced value; but that, in a country destitute of credit, soon fell to an inconsiderable value, and augmented rather than relieved the public distress.¹

¹ Hard. v.
175, 176.
Bot. ii. 443.

Joseph Buonaparte, brother to Napoleon, had been

“gives us full satisfaction in everything regarding any errors in accounting, weight, &c., that may occur in the payment of the 30,000,000 francs. *The payments in diamonds amount to 11,271,000 francs, (£450,000.)* He has paid 4,000,000 in francs, of contributions levied since the treaty of Tolentino. But it is with the utmost difficulty that these payments are raised; the country is exhausted; let us not drive it to bankruptcy. My agent, citizen Haller, wrote to me the other day, ‘Do not forget, citizen minister, that the immense and unceasing demands of the army oblige us to *play the corsair a little*, and that we must not enter into discussions, as it would sometimes turn out that we are in the wrong.’ I always supported a mortal war against the Pope, as long as the Papal government resisted; but now that it is prostrated at our feet, I am become exceedingly pacific: I think such a system is both for your interest and for that of the Directory.”² On the 25th May 1797, the same ambassador wrote

June 3, 1797.

² Corresp.
Conf. iii.
274, 275.

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71.

Intrigues of
the French
embassy at
Rome.

appointed ambassador at the court of Rome ; but as his character was deemed too honourable for political intrigue, Generals Duphot and Sherlock were sent along with him, to do that at which it was feared he might spurn. The former had become known from his success in effecting the overthrow of the Genoese aristocracy. The French embassy, under their direction, soon became the centre of the revolutionary action, and those numerous ardent characters with which the Italian cities abound, flocked there as to a common focus, from whence the next great explosion of democratic fervour was to be expected.* In this extremity, Pius VI., who was above eighty years of age, and sinking into the grave, called to his counsels the Austrian General Provera, already distinguished in the Italian campaigns ; but Napoleon and the Directory soon compelled the humiliated Pontiff to dismiss that intrepid counsellor.† As his recovery then seemed hopeless, the instructions of government to their ambassador were to

to Napoleon :—" I am occupied in collecting and transporting from hence to Milan *all the diamonds and jewels I can collect* ; I send there also whatever is made the subject of dispute in the payments of the contributions. You will keep in view that the people here are exhausted, and that it is in vain to expect the destitute to pay. I take advantage of these circumstances to prostrate at your feet Rome and the Papal government."¹ On the 5th August 1797, he again wrote to Napoleon,—" Discontent is at its height in the Papal States: the government will fall to pieces of itself, as I have repeatedly predicted to you. But it is not at Rome that the explosion will take place ; too many persons are here dependent upon the expenditure of the great. The payment of 3,000,000, stipulated by the treaty of Tolentino, at the close of so many previous losses, has totally exhausted this old carcass. *We are making it expire by a slow fire* ; it will soon crumble to the dust. The revolutionists, by accelerating matters, would only hasten a dissolution certain and inevitable."²

* It would appear, however, that the French ambassador was by no means satisfied with the first efforts of the Roman patriots. "They have manifested," said Joseph Buonaparte to Napoleon, "all the disposition to overturn the government, but none of the resolution. If they have thought and felt like Brutus, and the great men of antiquity, they have spoken like women, and acted like children. The government has caused them all to be arrested."—Letter, JOSEPH to NAPOLEON, 10th September 1797 ; *Corresp. Confid.*

† "You must forthwith intimate to the Court of Rome," said Napoleon to his brother Joseph, ambassador there, "that if General Provera is not immediately sent away from Rome, the Republic will regard it as a declaration of war. I attach the utmost importance to the removal of an Austrian commander from the Roman troops. You will insist not only that he be deprived of the command of the Roman troops, but that within twenty-four hours he depart from Rome. Assume a high tone : it is only by evincing the greatest

¹ *Corresp. Conf. iii.*
246, 249.

² *Ibid. iii.*
515, 516.

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¹ Bot. ii. 443,
445. Lac.
xiv. 145, 147.
Jom. x. 332.

72.

The open
steps of the
French to
overthrow
the Papal
govern-
ment.

delay the proclamation of a republic till his death, when the vacant chair of St Peter might be overturned with little difficulty; but such was the activity of the revolutionary agents, that the train was ready to take fire before that event took place, and the ears of the Romans were assailed by incessant abuse of the ecclesiastical government, and vehement declamations in favour of republican freedom.¹

The resolution to overturn the Papal government, like all the other ambitious projects of the Directory, received a very great impulse from the reascendency of Jacobin influence at Paris, by the results of the revolution of 18th Fructidor. One of the first measures of the new government was to despatch an order to Joseph Buonaparte at Rome, to promote, by all the means in his power, the approaching revolution in the Papal States; and above all things to take care that, at the Pope's death, no successor should be elected to the chair of St Peter.* Napoleon's

firmness, and making use of the most energetic expressions, that you will succeed in overawing the Papal authority. Timid when you show your teeth, they rapidly become overbearing if you treat them with any respect. I know the Court of Rome well. That single step, if properly taken, will complete its ruin. At the same time, you will hold out to the Papal secretary of state, 'That the French Republic, continuing its feelings of regard for the Papal government, is on the point of restoring Ancona. You are ruining all your affairs; the whole responsibility rests on your head. The French troops will give you no assistance in quelling the revolts with which you are menaced, if you continue your present course.' Should the Pope die, you must do your utmost to prevent the nomination of a successor, and bring about a revolution. Depend upon it, the King of Naples will not stir. Should he do so, you will inform him that the Roman people are under the protection of the French Republic; but at the same time you must hold out to him secretly that the French government is desirous to renew its negotiations with him. In a word, you must be as haughty in public as you are pliant in private;—the object of the first being to deter him from entering Rome; of the last, to make him believe that it is for his interest not to do so. Should no revolutionary movement break out at Rome, so that there is no pretence for preventing the nomination of a Pope, at least take care that the Cardinal Albani is not put in nomination. Declare, that the moment that is done, I will march upon Rome."²—*Secret Despatch, NAPOLEON to JOSEPH BUONAPARTE, dated Passeriano, 20th September 1797.* These instructions, it is to be recollected, were sent to the French ambassador at Rome, when France was still and completely at peace with the Holy See, and when the latter had honourably discharged the burdensome conditions of the treaty of Tolentino.

² Corresp.
Conf. iv.
199, 201.

* Talleyrand, on 10th October, wrote to Joseph Buonaparte at Rome,—"You have two things, citizen-general, to do: 1. To prevent, by all possible

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language to the Roman pontiff became daily more menacing. Immediately before setting out for Rastadt, he ordered his brother Joseph to intimate to the Pope that three thousand additional troops had been forwarded to Ancona; that if the Austrian general Provera was not dismissed within twenty-four hours, war would be declared; that if any of the revolutionists who had been arrested were executed, reprisals would forthwith be exercised on the cardinals; and that, if the Cisalpine republic was not recognised, it would be the signal for immediate hostilities.* At the same time, ten thousand troops of the Cisalpine Republic advanced to St Leon, in the Papal Duchy of Urbino, and made themselves masters of that fortress; while at Ancona, which was still garrisoned by French troops, notwithstanding its stipulated restoration by the treaty of Tolentino to the Holy See, the democratic party openly proclaimed "the

means, the King of Naples from entering the Papal territory. 2. To increase, rather than restrain, the good dispositions of those who think that it is high time the reign of the popes should finish; in a word, to encourage the aspirations of the Roman people towards liberty. At all events, take care that we get hold of Ancona and a large portion of the coast of Italy."¹ Eleven days afterwards la Révellière-Lépaux, the President of the Directory, wrote to Napoleon,—“In regard to Rome, the Directory cordially approve of the instructions you have given to your brother, to prevent a successor being appointed to Pius VI. We must lay hold of the present favourable circumstances to *deliver Europe from the pretended Papal supremacy*. Tuscany will next attract your attention. You will, therefore, if hostilities are resumed, give the Grand-duke his *congé*, and *facilitate by every means the establishment of a free and representative government in Tuscany*.”—*Letter of the Directory to Napoleon, 21st October 1797; Corresp. Confid. iv. 244.*

¹ Corresp.
Conf. Oct.
10, 1797.

* “I cannot tell you, citizen-ambassador,” said Napoleon, “what indignation I felt when I heard that Provera was still in the service of the Pope. Let him know instantly, that, though the French Republic is at peace with the Holy See, it will not for an instant suffer any officer or agent of the Imperialists to hold any situation under the Papal government. You will, therefore, insist on the dismissal of M. Provera within twenty-four hours, on pain of instantly demanding your passports. You will let him know that I have moved three thousand additional soldiers to Ancona, not one of whom will recede till Provera is dismissed. Let him know further, that if one of the prisoners for political offences is executed, Cardinal Rusca and the other cardinals shall answer for it with their heads. Finally, make him aware that, the moment you quit the Papal territory, Ancona will be incorporated with the Cisalpine Republic. You will easily understand that the last phrase must be *spoken, not written*.”—*Confidential Letter, NAPOLEON to JOSEPH BUONAPARTE, 14th Nov. 1797.*

Anconite republic." Similar revolutionary movements took place at Corneto, Civita Vecchia, Pesaro, and Sinigaglia; while at Rome itself, Joseph Buonaparte, by compelling the Papal government to liberate all persons confined for political offences, suddenly threw forth upon the capital several hundreds of the most heated republicans in Italy.

After this great addition to the strength of the revolutionists, measures were no longer kept with the government. Seditious meetings were constantly held in every part of the city; immense collections of tricolor cockades were made to distinguish the insurgents, and deputations of the citizens openly waited upon the French ambassador, to invite him to support the insurrection, to which he replied in ambiguous terms—"The fate of nations, as of individuals, being buried in the womb of futurity, it is not given to me to penetrate its mysteries."¹

¹ Hard. vi.
196, 206.

In this temper of men's minds, a spark was sufficient to occasion an explosion. On the 27th December 1797, an immense crowd assembled, with seditious cries, and moved to the palace of the French ambassador, where they exclaimed, "Vive la République Romaine!" and loudly invoked the aid of the French to enable them to plant the tricolor flag on the Capitol. The insurgents displayed the tricolor cockade, and evinced the most menacing disposition; the danger was extreme; from similar beginnings the overthrow of the governments of Venice and Genoa had rapidly followed. The Papal ministers sent a regiment of dragoons to prevent any sortie of the revolutionists from the palace of the French ambassador; and they repeatedly warned the insurgents, that their orders were to allow no one to leave its precincts. Duphot, however, indignant at being restrained by the pontifical troops, drew his sword, rushed down the staircase, and put himself at the head of one hundred and fifty armed Roman democrats, who were now contending with the dragoons in the court-yard of the palace;² he was immediately killed by a discharge ordered by the sergeant

73.

Duphot is slain in a scuffle at the French ambassador's.

² Joseph Buonaparte's Report. Hard. v. 207, 209, 215. Bot. ii. 445, 447. Lac. xiv. 146, 147. Jom. x. 333, 334.

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commanding the patrol of the Papal troops ; and the ambassador himself, who had followed to appease the tumult, narrowly escaped the same fate. A violent scuffle ensued, several persons were slain and wounded on both sides ; and, after remaining several hours in the greatest alarm, Joseph Buonaparte with his suite retired to Florence.

74.
War is in
consequence
declared,
and Berthier
advances to
Rome.

This catastrophe, however obviously occasioned by the revolutionary schemes which were in agitation at the residence of the French ambassador, having taken place within the precincts of his palace, was unhappily a violation of the law of nations, and gave the Directory too fair a ground to demand satisfaction. They instantly resolved to make it the pretext for the immediate occupation of Rome, and overthrow of the Papal government. The march of troops out of Italy was countermanded, and Berthier, the commander-in-chief, received orders to advance rapidly into the Ecclesiastical States. Meanwhile, the democratic spirit burst forth more violently than ever at Ancona and the neighbouring towns ; and the Papal authority was soon lost in all the provinces on the eastern slope of the Apennines. To these accumulated disasters, the Pontiff could only oppose the fasts and prayers of an aged conclave—weapons of spiritual warfare little calculated to arrest the conquerors of Arcola and Lodi. Berthier, without an instant's delay, carried into execution the orders of the Directory. Six thousand Poles, who on the wreck of their country had entered the French service, were stationed at Rimini to cover the Cisalpine Republic ; a reserve was established at Tolentino, while the commander-in-chief, at the head of eighteen thousand veteran troops, entered Ancona. Having completed the work of revolution in that turbulent district, and secured the fortress, he crossed the Apennines ; and advancing by Foligno and Narni, appeared on the 10th February before the Eternal City.¹ The Pope, in the utmost consternation, shut himself up in the Vatican, and

Jan. 25.

¹ Bot. ii.
450, 452.
Jom. x. 334,
336. Harl.
v. 230, 241.

spent night and day at the foot of the altar in imploring the Divine protection.*

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75.

Revolution
at Rome.

Rome, almost defenceless, would have offered no obstacle to the entrance of the French troops; but it was part of the policy of the Directory to make it appear that their aid was invoked by the spontaneous will of the inhabitants. Contenting himself, therefore, with occupying the castle of St Angelo, from which the feeble guards of the Pope were soon expelled, Berthier kept his troops for five days encamped without the walls. At length the revolutionists having completed their preparations, a noisy crowd assembled in the Campo Vaccino, the ancient Forum; the old foundations of the Capitol were made again to resound with the cries—if these were not dictated by the spirit—of freedom, and the venerable ensigns, bearing the S.P.Q.R., after the lapse of fourteen hundred years, floated in the winds. The multitude tumultuously demanded the overthrow of the Papal authority; the French troops were invited to enter; the conquerors of Italy, with a haughty air, passed the gates of Aurelian, defiled through the Piazza del Popolo, gazed on the indestructible monuments of Roman grandeur, and, amidst the shouts of the inhabitants, the tricolor flag was displayed from the summit of the Capitol.¹

Feb. 15.

¹ Bot. ii.
458, 459.
Jom. x. 336.
Lac. xiv.
150.

But while part of the Roman populace, mistaking their recollections for prophecies, were surrendering themselves

* The Directory, in their orders to Berthier, prescribed to him a course as perfidious as it was hostile. Their words were as follows:—"The intention of the Directory is, that you march *as secretly and rapidly* as possible on Rome with 18,000 men. Celerity is of the utmost importance: that alone can insure success. The King of Naples will probably send an envoy to your headquarters, to whom you will declare that the French government *is actuated by no ambitious designs*; and that, if it was generous enough to restrain its indignation at Tolentino, when it had much more serious causes of complaint against the Holy See, it is still more probable that it will do the same now. While holding out these assurances, you will at the same time advance as rapidly as possible towards Rome: the great object is to keep your design secret, till you are so near that city that the King of Naples cannot prevent it. When within two days' march of Rome, menace the Pope and all the members of the government, in order to terrify them, and make them take to flight. Arrived in Rome, *employ your whole influence to establish a Roman republic*."—HARD. v. 222.

Berthier, however, was too much a man of honour to enter cordially into the

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76.

Atrocious
cruelty of
the French
to the Pope.

to a pardonable intoxication upon the fancied recovery of their liberties, the agents of the Directory were preparing for them the sad realities of slavery. The Pope, who had been guarded by five hundred soldiers ever since the entry of the Republicans, was directed to retire into Tuscany; his Swiss guard relieved by a French one, and he himself ordered to dispossess himself of all his temporal authority. He replied, with the firmness of a martyr, "I am prepared for every species of disgrace. As supreme Pontiff, I am resolved to die in the exercise of all my powers. You may employ force—you have the power to do so; but know that though you may be masters of my body, you are not so of my soul. Free in the region where it is placed, it fears neither the events nor the sufferings of this life. I stand on the threshold of another world; there I shall be sheltered alike from the violence and impiety of this." Force was soon employed to dispossess him of his authority; he was dragged from the altar in his palace, his repositories were all ransacked and plundered, the rings even torn from his fingers, the whole effects in the Vatican and Quirinal inventoried and seized, and the aged pontiff conducted, with only a few domestics, amidst the brutal jests and sacrilegious songs of the French dragoons, into Tuscany, where the generous hospitality of the Grand-duke strove to soften the hardships of his exile.¹ But though a captive in the hands of his enemies, the venerable old man still retained the supreme autho-

¹ Bot. ii.
463. Lac.
xiv. 152,
153. Hard.
v. 243, 244.
Pacca, i.
172, 174.

revolutionary projects of the Directory. On 1st January 1798, he wrote to Napoleon:—"I always told you the command in Italy was not suited to me. I wish to *extricate myself from revolutions*. Four years' service in them in America, ten in France, is enough, general. I shall ever be ready to combat as a soldier for my country, but have no desire to be mixed up with revolutionary politics."² It would appear that the Roman people generally had no greater desire than he had to be involved in a revolution; for, on the morning of his arrival at that city, he wrote to Napoleon:—"I have been in Rome since this morning; but I have found nothing but the utmost consternation among the inhabitants. *One solitary patriot* has appeared at headquarters; *he offered to put at my disposal two thousand galley-slaves*; you may believe how I received that proposition. My further presence here is useless. I beseech you to recall me; it is the greatest boon you can possibly confer upon me."—*Berthier to Napoleon, 10th Feb. 1798; Corresp. Confid. iv. 510.*

² Corresp.
Conf. iv. 482.

city in the church. From his retreat in the convent of the Chartreuse, he yet guided the councils of the faithful; multitudes fell on their knees wherever he passed, and sought that benediction from a captive which they would, perhaps, have disregarded from a ruling pontiff.

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The subsequent treatment of this venerable man was as disgraceful to the Republican government as it was honourable to his piety and constancy as the head of the church. Fearful that, from his virtues and sufferings, he might have too much influence on the continent of Italy, he was removed by their orders to Leghorn, in March 1799, with the design of transferring him to Cagliari in Sardinia; and the English cruisers in the Mediterranean redoubled their vigilance, in the generous hope of rescuing the father of an opposite church from the persecution of his enemies. Apprehensive of losing their prisoner, the French altered his destination, and forcing him to traverse, often during the night, the Apennines and the Alps, in a rigorous season, he at length reached Valence, where, after an illness of ten days, he expired in the eighty-second year of his age, and the twenty-fourth of his pontificate. The cruelty of the Directory increased as he approached their dominions; all his old attendants were compelled to leave him, and the Father of the Faithful was allowed to expire, attended only by his confessor. Yet even in this disconsolate state, he derived the highest satisfaction from the devotion and reverence of the people in the provinces of France through which he passed. Multitudes from Gap, Vizelle, and Grenoble, flocked to the road to receive his benediction; and he frequently repeated, with tears in his eyes, the words of Scripture: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not seen such faith, no, not in Israel."¹

77.
Their continued severity towards him. He is removed into France, and there dies.

Aug. 29,
1799.

¹ Hard. v. 248, 253.
Lac. xiv. 157, 159.
Bot. ii. 464.
Pacca, i. 180, 194.

But long before the Pope had sunk under the persecution of his oppressors, Rome had experienced the bitter fruits of republican fraternisation. Immediately after the entry of the French troops, commenced the regular and systematic pillage of the city. Not only the churches

78.
Systematic and infamous pillage of Rome by the French.

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and the convents, but the palaces of the cardinals and of the nobility, were laid waste. The agents of the Directory, insatiable in the pursuit of plunder, and merciless in the means of exacting it, ransacked every quarter within its walls, seized the most valuable works of art, and stripped the Eternal City of those treasures which had survived the Gothic fire and escaped the rapacious hands of the Spanish soldiers in the reign of Charles V. The bloodshed was much less, but the spoil collected incomparably greater, than at the disastrous sack which followed the storm of the city and death of the Constable Bourbon. Almost all the great works of art which have since that time been collected throughout Europe, were then scattered abroad. The spoliation exceeded all that the Goths or Vandals had effected. Not only the palaces of the Vatican and the Monte Cavallo, and the chief nobility of Rome, but those of Castel Gandolfo, on the margin of the Alban lake, of Terracina, the Villa Albani, and others in the environs of Rome, were plundered of every article of value which they possessed. The whole sacerdotal habits of the Pope and cardinals were burnt, in order to collect from the flames the gold with which they were adorned. The Vatican was stripped to its naked walls; the immortal frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo, which could not be removed, alone remained in solitary beauty amidst the general desolation. A contribution of four millions of francs in money, two millions in provisions, and three thousand horses, was imposed on a city already exhausted by the enormous exactions it had previously undergone. Under the directions of the infamous commissary Haller, the domestic library, museum, furniture, jewels, and even the private clothes of the Pope, were sold. Nor did the palaces of the Roman nobility escape devastation. The noble galleries of the Cardinal Braschi, and the Cardinal York, the last relic of the Stuart line, underwent the same fate.¹ Others, as those of the Chigi, Borghese, and Doria palaces, were rescued

¹ Hard. v.
244, 245,
249. Bot.
ii. 465, 469,
470. Jom.
x. 336, 337.
Lac. xiv.
160, 161.

from destruction only by enormous ransoms. Everything of value that the treaty of Tolentino had left in Rome became the prey of republican cupidity; and the very name of freedom soon became odious from the sordid and infamous crimes which were committed under its shelter.

Nor was the oppression of the French confined to the plunder of palaces and churches. Eight cardinals were arrested and sent to Civita Castellana; while enormous contributions were levied on the Papal territory, and brought home the bitterness of conquest to every poor man's door. At the same time, the ample territorial possessions of the church and the monasteries were confiscated, and declared national property; a measure which, by drying up at once the whole resources of the affluent classes, precipitated into the extreme of misery the numerous poor who were maintained by their expenditure, or fed by their bounty. All the respectable citizens and clergy were in fetters; and a base and despicable faction alone, among whom, to their disgrace be it told, were found fourteen cardinals, followed in the train of their oppressors; and at a public festival, returned thanks to God for the miseries they had brought upon their country.¹

To such a height did the disorders rise, that they excited the indignation of the army itself, albeit little scrupulous in general about the means by which plunder was acquired. While the agents of the Directory were thus enriching themselves and sullyng the name of France by unheard-of spoliation, the inferior officers and soldiers were suffering the greatest privations. For several months they had been without pay, their clothes were worn out, their feet bare, their knapsacks empty. Indignant at the painful contrast which their condition offered to that of the civil agents, who were daily becoming richer from the spoils of the city, and comparing their penury with the luxurious condition of the corps stationed in the Cisalpine republic, the officers and soldiers in and around Rome

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1798.

79.
Confisca-
tion of the
whole
church
property in
the Papal
territories.

¹ Bot. ii.
472, 473.
Ann. Reg.
60, 62, Jan.
x. 337, 338.
Lac. xiv.
160, 161.

80.
These dis-
orders excite
even the
indignation
of the
French
army.
Great mu-
tiny at
Rome and
Mantua.

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Feb. 24.

gave vent to open and unmeasured terms of vituperation. On the 24th February a general meeting of all the officers, from the rank of captain downwards, was held in the Pantheon, at which an address was agreed on to General Berthier, in which they declared their detestation of the extortions which had been practised in Rome, protested that they would no longer be the instruments of the ignominious wretches who had made such a use of their valour, and insisted for immediate payment of their large arrears. The discontents soon wore so alarming an aspect, that Massena, who had assumed the command, ordered all the troops, excepting three thousand, to leave the capital. But they refused to obey; and another meeting, at which still more menacing language was used, having shortly after been held, which his soldiers refused to disperse, he was compelled to abandon the command, and retire to Ancona, leaving the direction of the army to General d'Allemagne. At the same time the troops in Mantua raised the standard of revolt, and, resolving to abandon Italy, had already fixed all their days' march to Lyons and the banks of the Rhone.¹*

¹ St Cyr,
Hist. Mil.
i. 35, 36.
Ann. Reg.
60, 61. Jom.
x. 338, Bot.
ii. 470, 471.
Hard.v. 254.

* The remonstrance framed by the French army at this great meeting in the Pantheon bears:—"The first cause of our discontent is regret that a horde of robbers, who have insinuated themselves into the confidence of the nation, should deprive us of our honour. These men enter the chief houses of Rome, give themselves out for persons authorised to receive contributions, carry off all the gold, jewels, and horses; in a word, every article of value they can find, without giving any receipts. This conduct, if it remains unpunished, is calculated to bring eternal disgrace on the French nation in the eyes of the whole universe. We could furnish a thousand proofs of these assertions. The second cause is the misery in which both officers and men are involved; destitute of pay for five months; in want of everything. The excessive luxury of the officers of the staff affords a painful contrast to the naked condition of the general body of the army. The third cause of the general discontent is the arrival of General Massena. The soldiers have not forgotten the extortions and robberies he has committed wherever he has been invested with the command. The Venetian territory, and above all Padua, is a district teeming with proofs of his immorality."² In an address to Berthier from the officers of the army, the expressions are still more strong:—"The soldiers are in the utmost misery for want of pay. Many millions are in the public chest; three would discharge their arrears. We disavow in the sight of Heaven, in whose temple we are assembled, the crimes committed in the city of Rome and the Ecclesiastical States; we swear that we will no longer be the instruments of the wretches who have perpetrated them. We insist that the effects seized

² Hard.v. 526.

The Roman populace, encouraged by these dissensions among their oppressors, deemed the opportunity favourable to shake off the yoke, and recover their independence. But they soon found that it is easier to invite an enemy within your walls than expel him when the gates are placed in his hands. The assemblages in Rome were soon dispersed with great slaughter by General d'Allemagne; and, collecting a few troops, he moved rapidly to Velletri and Castel Gandolfo, routed the insurgents who had occupied these posts, and struck such a terror into the inhabitants, that they quickly threw aside their arms, and abandoned all thoughts of further resistance.¹

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1798.
81.

Revolt of
the Roman
populace.
Its rapid
suppression.

¹ Hard. v.
267, 270.
Jom. x. 338.
Ann. Reg.
65. Bot. ii.
470, 471.
St Cyr. i.
39, 48.

Meanwhile the work of revolution proceeded rapidly in the Roman states. The whole ancient institutions were subverted; the executive was made to consist of five consuls, after the model of the French Directory; heavy contributions and forced loans were exacted from the wealthier classes; the legislative power was vested in two chambers, chosen by the lowest ranks, and the state divided into eight departments. But, to preserve the

82.
The whole
Papal state
are revolution-
ised.
New constitution,
and
alliance with
France.

from various individuals, belonging to states with whom we are still at peace, be restored; and, independent of our pay, we persist in demanding justice upon the official and elevated monsters, plunged night and day in luxury and debauchery, who have committed the robberies and spoliations in Rome."—See St-Cyr, *Hist. Mil.* l. 282.

A singular occurrence took place at the revolt in Mantua, highly characteristic of the composition of the French army in Italy at this period. The chief of the twelfth demi-brigade, when endeavouring, sword in hand, to defend the standard with which he was intrusted, killed one of the grenadiers. His fellow-soldiers immediately exclaimed, "We will not revenge our comrade; you are only doing your duty." The chief of the fourteenth wishing, for the same reason, to resist the mutineers, they unscrewed their bayonets from their guns, to prevent his being injured in the strife which ensued for its seizure. Not a single officer was insulted or maltreated; the battalions answered by unanimous refusals all exhortations to return to their duty, but the sentinels saluted the officers when they passed, as if in a state of the most perfect subordination. No acts of pillage followed the raising of the standard of revolt, though the shops where it broke out were all open and unguarded. The soldiers there, equally as their brethren at Rome, were loud in their condemnation of the officers and civil authorities who had "embezzled all the funds which should have gone to the payment of their arrears." In the midst of so much revolutionary profligacy and corruption, it is pleasing to have to record traits so honourable to the French army.—See BARAGUAY D'HILLIERS' *Report*, 19th Feb. 1798; *Corresp. Confid.* iv. 517, 525.

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entire dependence of this government on the French Directory, it was specially provided that an alliance, offensive and defensive, should immediately be concluded between the French and Roman republics; that no laws made by the Roman legislative bodies should either be promulgated or have force without the approval of the French general stationed at Rome; and that he might, of his own authority, enact such laws as might appear necessary, or were ordered by the French Directory. At the same time edicts were published, prohibiting the nobles, under severe penalties, from dismissing any of their domestics, or discontinuing any of their charitable donations, on account of the diminished or ruined state of their fortunes.¹

¹ Hard. v.
263, 275.
Bot. ii. 474,
475. Ann.
Reg. 66.

83.
Violent
revolutions
effected by
the French
in the Cis-
alpine re-
public.
March 29.

While the Roman states were thus undergoing fusion in the revolutionary crucible, the constitution of the Cisalpine republic disappeared as rapidly as it had been formed. Towards the end of March, a treaty was concluded at Paris between the French republic and its infant offspring, by which it was stipulated that the latter should receive a French garrison of twenty-two thousand infantry, and two thousand five hundred cavalry, to be paid and clothed while there by it; and that, in case of war, they should mutually assist each other with all their forces. This treaty, which placed its resources entirely at the disposal of France, was highly unpopular in the whole Cisalpine republic; and it was not without the utmost difficulty, and by the aid, both of threats of arresting a large portion of their members, and unbounded promises in case of compliance, that the councils could be brought to ratify it. The democratic spirit extended greatly in the country. Those chosen to the principal offices of government were all men of the most violent temperament, and a conspiracy was generally formed to emancipate themselves from French thralldom, and establish, instead of a Gallic yoke, real freedom. To curb this dangerous disposition, the Directory sent Trouvé, a man

of a determined character, to Milan; and his first care was to suppress, by measures of severity, the spirit of freedom which threatened to thwart the ambitious projects of the French government. With this view the constitution of the republic was violently changed by the Transalpine forces; the number of deputies was reduced from 240 to 120, and those only retained who were known to be devoted to the French government. After this violent revolution, Trouvé, who was detested throughout all Lombardy, was recalled, and Brune and Fouché were successively sent in his stead; but all their efforts proved ineffectual to stem the torrent. The discontents went on continually increasing, and at length recourse was openly had to military force. On the morning of the 6th December, the legislative body was surrounded with foreign bayonets; the senators opposed to the French interest were expelled; several members of the Directory were changed, and the government was prostrated, as in France and Holland, by a military despotism. The democratic constitution, established by Napoleon, was immediately annulled, and a new one established under the dictation of the French ambassador, in the formation of which no attention was paid to the liberties or wishes of the people.¹

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1798.

Aug. 30.

Dec. 6.
1 Bot. iii.
45, 58. Lac.
xiv. 172.
Th. x. 175.
177. Jom.
x. 364, 365.

These violent changes, introduced by the mere force of military power, occasioned the utmost discontent in the Cisalpine republic, and contributed, more than anything that had yet occurred, to cool the ardour of the Italian revolutionists. "This, then," it was said, "is the faith, the fraternity, and the friendship which you have brought to us from France! This is the liberty, the prosperity, which you boast of having established in Italy! What vast materials for eloquence do you afford to those who have never trusted to your promises! They will say, that you only promised liberty to the Italians, in order that you might be the better enabled to plunder and oppress them; that under every project of reform were concealed new and still more grievous chains; that gold,

84.
Excessive
discontent
excited
by these
changes in
Lombardy.

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XXV.

1798.

¹ Bot. ii. 53.
Th. x. 177,
178.85.
The spoliation of the
King of Sardinia is resolved on.
His cruel humiliations.

not freedom, is your idol; that that fountain of everything noble or generous is not made for you, nor you for it; finally, that the liberty of France consists entirely in words and speeches; in the howling of a frantic tribune, and the declamations of impudent sophists. These changes which, with despotic power and so much unconcern, you have effected in the Cisalpine governments, will assuredly prove the forerunner of the fall of your own republic."¹*

While Lombardy was thus writhing under the withering grasp of the French republic, the King of Sardinia was undergoing the last acts of humiliation from his merciless allies. The early peace which this monarch had concluded with their victorious general, the fidelity with which he had discharged his engagements, the firm support which the possession of his fortresses had given to their arms, were unable to save him from spoliation. The Directory persisted in believing that a rickety republic, torn by intestine divisions, would be a more solid support to their power than a king who had devoted his last soldier and his last gun to their service. They soon found an excuse for subjecting him finally to their power, and rewarding him for his faithful adherence to their cause by the forfeiture of all his continental dominions. After the unworthy descendant of Emmanuel Victor had opened the gates of Italy to France by the fatal cession of the Piedmontese fortresses,† his life had been a continual scene of mortification and humiliations. His territories were

* Lucien Buonaparte did not hesitate, at Milan, to give vent to the same sentiments. "Nothing," said he, "can excuse the bad faith which has characterised these transactions. The innovations in the Cisalpine republic, tending as they do to abridge popular freedom by the excessive power they confer upon the Directory, especially the exclusive right of proposing laws, are worthy of eternal condemnation. Nations, disgusted at last with the vain and empty name of liberty which France is continually sounding in their ears, and with the constitutions given to them one day, only to be taken away the next, will finally conceive a well-founded detestation of the Republic, and prefer their former submission to a sovereign."—BORTA, ii. 53.

† The magnitude of the obligation thus conferred by Piedmont on France, was fully admitted by the Directory. "Never," said they, on congratulating Charles Emmanuel on his accession to the throne—"Never will France forget the obligations which she owes to the Prince of Piedmont."—HARD. vii. 72.

traversed in every direction by French columns, of whose approach he received no notification except a statement of the supplies required by them, which he was obliged to furnish gratuitously to the Republican commissaries. He was compelled to banish all the emigrants from his dominions, and oppress his subjects by enormous contributions for the use of his insatiable allies; while the language of the revolutionary clubs, openly patronised by the French ambassador and agents, daily became more menacing to the regal government.¹

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¹ Bot. ii. 53,
57. Jom. x.
365. Lac.
xiv. 174,
175.

At length they threw off the mask. The insurgents of the valleys of the Tanaro and the Bormida assembled to the number of six thousand in the neighbourhood of Carrosio, supported by two thousand troops of the Ligurian republic, who left Genoa at mid-day, with drums beating and the tricolor flag flying. Ginguené, the French ambassador, endeavoured to persuade the king, in the usual language of revolutionists, that there was no danger in conceding all the demands of the insurgents, but great in opposing any resistance to their wishes; and strongly urged the necessity, as a measure of security, of his placing the citadel of Turin in the hands of a French garrison; while the Ligurian republic resolutely refused any passage for the Piedmontese troops through that part of their territories which required to be passed before the insulated district of Carrosio could be reached. This was soon followed by a menacing proclamation, in which they declared their resolution to support the insurgents to the utmost of their power; while the French ambassador continued to insist for a complete pardon of these rebels, on condition of their laying down their arms; and, above all, for the immediate surrender of the citadel of Turin. When the troops of Piedmont approached the Ligurian territory to attack the rebels in Carrosio, the French ambassador forbade them to pass the frontier, lest they should violate the neutrality of the allied republic.² Notwithstanding this, they came up with the united forces of

86.
Successful
intrigues of
the French,
who seize
Turin.

June 10.

² Ann. Reg.
121, 122.
Bot. ii. 63,
65. Lac.
xiv. 175.

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87.
The king is
reduced to
the state of
a prisoner.

June 27.

the insurgents and Genoese, and defeated them in two engagements, with such loss, that it was evident their total overthrow was at hand.

The Directory now made no show of preserving moderation. They pretended that a conspiracy had been discovered for renewing the Sicilian Vespers with all the French in Piedmont, and, as a test of the king not being involved in the design, insisted on the immediate cession of the citadel of Turin. Pressed on all sides, threatened with insurrection in his own dominions, and menaced with the whole weight of republican vengeance, the king at length submitted to their demands; and that admirable fortress, the masterpiece of Vauban, which had stood, a century before, the famous siege which enabled the Austrian forces, under Eugene, to advance to its relief, and terminated in the expulsion of the French from Italy, was yielded without a struggle to their arms. The surrender of this impregnable stronghold put the King of Sardinia entirely at the mercy of the French troops. He was no longer permitted even the semblance of regal authority. French guards attended him on all occasions, and, under the guise of respect, kept him a state prisoner in his own palace; while the ambassadors of the other powers, deeming Piedmont now a French province, wrote to their respective sovereigns, requesting to be recalled from Turin, where the French ambassador was now the real monarch. The Republican generals improved the time to reduce the unhappy monarch to despair. They loaded all his ministers, civil and military, with accusations, and insisted on their dismissal from his court and capital; forced him to abandon all proceedings against the insurgents of every description; new-modelled the government according to their republican ideas, and compelled him to deliver up all the places he had taken from the Genoese republic.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
122. Bot.
iii. 112, 115.
Lac. xiv.
177.

For a few months this shadow of authority was left to the king; but at length his complete dethronement was effected. He was charged with having, in his secret cor-

respondence with Vienna, allowed a wish to escape him, that he might soon be delivered from his imperious allies; and only made his peace with the Directory by the immediate payment of 8,000,000 francs, or £320,000. When the Roman republic was invaded by the Neapolitans, he was ordered to furnish the stipulated contingent of eight thousand men; and this was agreed to. The surrender of all the royal arsenals was next demanded; and during the discussion of that demand, the French under Joubert treacherously commenced hostilities.* Novarra, Suza, Coni, and Alessandria, were surprised; a few battalions who attempted to resist were driven into Turin, where the king, having drained the cup of misery to the dregs, was compelled to resign all his continental dominions, which were immediately taken possession of by the French authorities. A fugitive from his capital, the ill-fated monarch left his palace by torch-light during the night, and owed his safe retreat to the island of Sardinia to the generous efforts of Talleyrand, then ambassador at Turin, who protected him from the dangers which threatened his life. A provisional government was immediately established in Turin, composed of twenty-five of the most vio-

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1798.

88.

He is at length forced to abdicate, and retire to Sardinia.

Dec. 8.

* Recovering, in the last extremity, a portion of the courage which, if earlier exerted, might have averted their fate, the Piedmontese cabinet at this crisis prepared a manifesto, which the Directory instantly and carefully suppressed. It bore:—"The Piedmontese government, in the anxious wish of sparing its subjects the misfortunes which threatened it, has acceded to all the demands of the French republic, both in contributions, clothing, and supplies for the army of Italy, though greatly exceeding the engagements which it had contracted, and which were so burdensome as entirely to exhaust the royal treasury. His majesty has even gone so far as to agree to place in their hands the citadel of Turin; and the very day on which it was demanded, he gave orders for the furnishing of the contingent stipulated by the treaty. At the same moment he despatched a messenger to Paris to negotiate concerning other demands which were inadmissible, in particular the surrender of all the arsenals. But in the midst of these measures, the commander of the French garrison in the citadel of Turin violently seized possession of the towns of Novarra, Alessandria, Chivasso, and Suza. His majesty, profoundly afflicted at these events, feels it his duty to declare thus publicly, that he has faithfully performed all his engagements to France, and given no provocation whatever to the disastrous events which threaten his kingdom." Grouchy, the French general, forced the king to suppress this proclamation, threatening to bombard him in his own palace in case of refusal.¹

¹ Hard. vii.
117.

The unworthy intrigues, falsehoods, and menaces by which the resignation

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¹ Hard. vii.
126, 128.
Jom. xi. 59.
Lac. xiv.
178, 179.
Bot. iii.
120, 137.

lent of the democratic party; while Grouchy took possession of the treasury, arsenals, and fortresses of the kingdom, and published a proclamation, denouncing the pain of death against whoever had a pound of powder or a gun in his possession, and declaring that any of the nobles who might engage in an insurrection should be arrested, sent to France, and have half their goods confiscated.¹

89.
Affairs of
Naples.

While these events were in progress in the north of Italy, war had arisen and a kingdom been overthrown in the south of the peninsula. Naples, placed on the edge of the revolutionary volcano since the erection of the States of the Church into a separate republic, had viewed with the utmost alarm the progress of the democratic spirit in its dominions; and on the occupation of Rome by the French troops, thirty thousand men were stationed in the mountain passes on the frontier, in the belief that an immediate invasion was intended. These apprehensions were not diminished by the appearance of the expedition to Egypt in the Mediterranean, the capture of Malta, and the vicinity of so large a force to the coasts of Naples. Rightly judging, from the fate of the other states in Italy, that their destruction was unavoidable,

of the throne was forced upon the king, are thus detailed by the same general in his secret report to the Directory:—"The moment had now arrived, when all the springs which I had prepared were to be put in motion. At this crisis an envoy came to me from the king; he was a man to be gained, and was so; other persons were also corrupted: but the great difficulty was, that these propositions all emanated from the king, and that no writing reached me, so that in no event could I be disavowed. Circumspection was the more necessary, as *war was not yet declared against the King of Sardinia*, and it was necessary to act so that his resignation might appear to be voluntary. I confined myself to threatening the envoy, and sent him out of the citadel. Meanwhile, my secret agents were incessantly at work; the envoy returned to me: I announced the arrival of columns which had not yet come up; and informed him that the hour of vengeance had arrived: that Turin was surrounded on all sides, that escape was impossible, and that unqualified submission alone remained. The Council of State had sat all the morning; my hidden emissaries there had carried their point. The conditions I exacted were agreed to. I insisted, as an indispensable preliminary, that all the Piedmontese troops which had been assembled in Turin for a month past should be dismissed; in presence of Clausel, the king signed the order; and after eight hours of further altercation, the same officer compelled him to sign the whole articles which I had required."—See HARD. vii. 118, 120. See also the *Resignation*, correctly given in HARD. vii. 122, *et seq.*

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either from internal revolution or external violence, if measures were not taken to avert the danger, the Neapolitan cabinet augmented their military establishment, and secretly entered into negotiations with Austria,—whose disposition to put a stop to the further encroachments of France was obvious from her occupation of the Grisons,—for the purpose of concerting measures for their common defence. The French ambassador, Garat, a well-known republican, in vain endeavoured to allay their apprehensions; but, at the same time, smiled at the feeble military force with which they hoped to arrest the conquerors of Arcola and Rivoli.¹

¹ Jom. xi.
33, 34. Lac.
xiv. 165,
166. Ann.
Reg. 125.

Considered merely with reference to the number and equipment of its forces, the Neapolitan monarchy was by no means to be despised, and was capable, apparently, of interfering with decisive effect in the approaching struggle between France and Austria in the Italian peninsula. Its infantry consisted of thirty thousand regular soldiers and fifteen thousand militia; the artillery, organised by French officers, was on the best possible footing; and the cavalry had given proof of its efficiency in the actions on the Po, in the commencement of the campaign of 1796. Forty thousand men were ordered to be added to the army, to raise it to the war establishment, and the militia to be quadrupled. But these energetic measures were never carried into full execution; notwithstanding the imposition of heavy taxes, and liberal donations from the nobility and clergy, insurmountable difficulties were experienced in the levying and equipping so large a body of troops; and the effective forces of the monarchy never exceeded sixty thousand men, of which one-third were required to garrison the fortresses on the frontier. These troops, such as they were, proved utterly deficient in military spirit; the officers, appointed by court intrigue, had lost all the confidence of the soldiers; and the discipline, alternately carried on upon the German and Spanish systems, was in the most deplorable state.² To crown the whole, the

^{90.}
Their mili-
tary prepara-
tions.

² Jom. xi. 34.
Ann. Reg.
124, 125.

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common men, especially in the infantry, were destitute of courage—a singular circumstance in the descendants of the Samnites, but which has invariably been the disgrace of the Neapolitan army since the fall of the Roman empire.

91.
Intrigues of
the French.
The court
enters into
secret en-
gagements
with Aus-
tria.

The French commenced their revolutionary measures in Naples, according to their usual practice, by requiring the immediate liberation of all those of the democratic party who were confined for political offences; and though this demand was highly obnoxious to the court, yet such was the terror inspired by the republican arms, that they were obliged to comply. Meanwhile, intrigues of every kind were set on foot by their agents in the Neapolitan territories; the insolence of their ambassador knew no bounds; the grossest libels against the queen and the royal family were daily published in the Roman papers, under the direction of the French generals; and a general military survey was made of the Neapolitan frontiers, and transmitted to the Directory at Paris. During these revolutionary measures, however, the French were daily augmenting their forces at Rome, and making preparations for offensive operations; and the cabinet of Naples was warned not to put any reliance on so distant a power as Austria, as the Republican troops in the Ecclesiastical States would be adequate to the conquest of Naples before the Imperial forces could pass the Po. But the court was firm; the military preparations were continued with unabated vigour, and a treaty, offensive and defensive, was concluded with the Emperor, by which the King of Naples was to be assisted, in the event of an invasion, by a powerful army of Austrians. It was no part of the first design of the Neapolitans to commence hostilities, but to wait till the republicans were fully engaged with the Imperialists on the Adige, when it was thought their forces might act with effect in the centre of the peninsula.¹

Aug. 10.

¹ Jom. x. 36.
Bot. iii. 142.
Ann. Reg.
125, 126.

Matters were in this inflammable state in the kingdom

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1798.

92.

They are encouraged to resist by the battle of the Nile, and on Nelson's arrival commence hostilities.
Aug. 20.

of Naples, when intelligence arrived of the glorious victory of the Nile, and the total destruction of the French fleet on the shores of Egypt, which will be recounted in the succeeding chapter. The effect produced over all Europe, but especially in Italy, by this great event, was truly electrical. It was the greatest defeat which the French had experienced since the rise of the Republic; it annihilated their naval power in the Mediterranean, left Malta to its fate, and, above all, seemed to banish Napoleon and his victorious troops for ever from the scene of European warfare. The language of humiliation and despondency was forthwith laid aside; loud complaints of the perfidy and extortion of the French armies became universal; and the giddy multitude, who had recently hailed their approach with tumultuous shouts of joy, taught by bitter experience, now prepared to salute, with still louder acclamations, those who should deliver them from their yoke. The enthusiasm at Naples was already very great, when the arrival of Nelson with his victorious fleet at that port raised it to the highest possible pitch. He was received with more than regal honours: the king and the queen went out to meet him in the bay; the immense and ardent population of the capital rent the air with their acclamations; and the shores of Posilippo were thronged with crowds anxious to catch a glance of the conqueror of the Nile. The remonstrances of the French ambassador were unable to restrain the universal joy; the presence of the British admiral was deemed a security against every danger—a signal for the resurrection of the world against its oppressors. In vain Ariola, and the more prudent counsellors of the king, represented the extreme peril of attacking, with their inexperienced forces, the veterans of France before the Austrians were ready to support them on the Adige. These wise remonstrances were disregarded; and the war party, at the head of which were the queen and Lady Hamilton, the wife of the British ambassador,¹ succeeded in securing a

¹ Jom. xi.
36, 37. Ann.
Reg. 125,
126. Th. x.
141, 144.

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93.

Forces
levied by the
French in
the affiliated
republics.

decision in favour of the immediate commencement of hostilities.

Though irritated to the last degree at the determined stand which the King of Naples had made against their revolutionary designs, and the open joy his subjects had testified at their disasters, the French were by no means desirous at this time to engage in immediate warfare with a new opponent. The battle of the Nile, and consequent isolation of their bravest army and best general, had greatly damped the arrogance of their former presumption; their finances were in a state of inextricable confusion; the soldiers, both at Rome and Mantua, had lately mutinied from want of pay; and the forces of Austria, supported, as it was foreseen they would be, by those of Russia, were rapidly increasing both in numbers and efficiency. In these circumstances, it was their obvious policy to temporise, and delay the overthrow of the Neapolitan monarchy till the great levies they were making in France were ready to take the field, and keep in check the Imperial forces on the Adige till the work of revolution in the south of Italy was completed. Meanwhile, the affiliated republics were called on to take their full share of the burdens consequent upon their alliance with France. Every man in Switzerland capable of bearing arms, from sixteen to forty-five years of age, was put in requisition; the King of Sardinia compelled to advance 8,000,000 francs; the Cisalpine republic assessed at a loan of 24,000,000 francs, or £1,000,000 sterling, and required to put its whole contingent at the disposal of France; and a fresh contribution of 12,000,000 francs imposed on the Roman territory, besides assignats being issued on the security of its ecclesiastical estates.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
128, 129.
Lac. xiv.
168. Jom.
xi. 37, 38.

94.
Mack takes
the com-
mand in
Naples.

Previous to the commencement of hostilities, the Neapolitan government had requested the Austrians to send them some general capable of directing the movements of the large force which they had in readiness to take the field. The Aulic Council sent General Mack, an officer

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who stood high at Vienna in the estimation of military men, but who, though skilled in sketching out plans of a campaign on paper, and possessed of considerable talent in strategical design, was totally destitute of the penetration and decision requisite for success in the field. Nelson at once saw through his character. "Mack," said he, "cannot travel without five carriages. I have formed my opinion of him: would to God that I may be mistaken!" —an opinion which, to the disgrace of Austria, was too fully verified in the events at Ulm, which have given a mournful notoriety to his name.¹

¹ Southey's
Nelson, ii.
19. Jom. xi.
168. Hard.
vii. 16.

95.
Dispersed
situation of
the French
troops.

Nov. 20.

For long the Directory persisted in the belief that the Neapolitans would never venture to take the field till the Austrian forces were ready to support them, which it was known would not be the case till the following spring. They had done nothing, accordingly, towards concentrating their troops; and when there could no longer be any doubt that war was about to commence, their only resource was to send Championnet to take the command of the army in the environs of Rome. He found them dispersed over a surface of sixty leagues. Macdonald, with six thousand, lay at Terracina, and guarded the narrow defile betwixt its rocks and the Mediterranean Sea; Casa-Bianca, with the left wing, five thousand strong, occupied the reverse of the Apennines towards Ancona; in the centre, General Lemoine, with four thousand men, was stationed at Terni, and watched the central defiles of the same mountain chain; while five thousand were in the neighbourhood of Rome. Thus twenty thousand men were stretched across the peninsula from sea to sea, while double that number of Neapolitans were concentrated in the environs of Capua, ready to separate and overwhelm them. This was rendered the more feasible, as the bulk of the forces of the cabinet of Naples, advanced in the Abruzzi, had passed, by a considerable distance, the Republicans at Rome and Terracina.² Circumstances never occurred more favourable for a decisive stroke, had

² Jom. xi.
38, 39, 40.
Ann. Reg.
131.

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96.

Mack com-
mences hos-
tilities, and
enters
Rome.
Nov. 23.

the Neapolitan generals possessed capacity to undertake, or their soldiers courage to execute it.

Mack began his operations on the 23d of November ; but, instead of profiting by the dispersion of the French force, to throw an overwhelming mass upon their centre, and detach and surround the right wing and troops at Rome, which were so far advanced as almost to invite his seizure, he divided his forces into five columns to enter the Roman territory by as many different points of attack. A corps of seven thousand infantry and six hundred horse was destined to advance along the shore of the Adriatic, towards Ancona ; two thousand men were directed against Terni and Foligno ; the main body, under Mack in person, consisting of twenty thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry, was moved forward, through the centre of the peninsula, by Valmontone, on Frascati ; while eight thousand infantry and three hundred cavalry advanced by Terracina and the Pontine marshes on Albano and Rome, and five thousand men were embarked on board some of Lord Nelson's ships, to be landed at Leghorn, and effect a diversion in the rear of the enemy. The overwhelming force which was directed against Frascati, and which threatened to separate the Republicans stationed there from the remainder of the army, obliged Championnet to evacuate Rome and concentrate his forces at Terni ; and the King of Naples made his triumphal entry into the Eternal City on the 29th. So wretched, however, was the state of discipline of his troops, that they soon fell into confusion merely from the fatigues of the march and the severity of the rains, and arrived in as great disorder, at the termination of a few days' advance, as if they had sustained a disastrous defeat. While Mack was reorganising his shaken battalions at Rome, General Lemoine succeeded in surrounding and making prisoners the corps of two thousand men which advanced against Terni ;¹ while Giustini, who commanded another little column in the centre, was driven

Nov. 27.
1 Jom. xi.
44, 46. Ann.
Reg. 129.
Hard. v. 11,
16, 18. Lac.
xiv. 169.

over the mountains to the main body on the banks of the Tiber. The corps which advanced against Ancona, after some trifling success, was thrown back about the same time within the Neapolitan frontier.

These successes, and the accounts he received of the disordered state of the main body of the enemy's forces at Rome, encouraged Championnet to keep his ground on the western slope of the Apennines. Stationing, therefore, Macdonald, with a large force, at Civita Castellana, perhaps the ancient Veii, a city surrounded by inaccessible precipices, and impassable ravines, crossed only by two lofty bridges, he hastened himself to Ancona, to accelerate the formation of the parks of artillery, and the organisation of the reserves of the army. This distribution of his forces exposed the troops at Civita Castellana to the risk of being cut off by an irruption, in force, of the enemy upon the line of their retreat at Terni; but the Republicans had not to contend either with the genius or the troops of Napoleon. Mack, persisting in the system of dividing his forces, exposed them to defeat from the veterans of France at every point of attack, and in truth, their character was such that by no possible exertions could they be brought to face the enemy. One of his columns, commanded by the Chevalier Saxe, destined to turn Civita Castellana on the left, was attacked, at the bridge of Borghetto over the Tiber, by Kniazwitz, at the head of three thousand of the Polish legion, and totally defeated, all its artillery being taken. The other, intended to turn it on the right, encountered the advanced guard of Macdonald near Nepi, and was speedily routed, with the loss of two thousand prisoners, all its baggage, and fifteen guns. In the centre, Marshal Bourcard in vain endeavoured to force the bridge of Rome, thrown over the chasm on the southern side of Civita Castellana; and at length Mack, finding both his wings defeated, withdrew his forces, and began to meditate a new design for dislodging his antagonists from their formidable position.¹

97.
The Neapolitans everywhere defeated when advancing further.

Dec. 4.
1 Th. x. 194,
195, 196.
Jom. xi.
48, 50.

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98.
Fresh disasters of the
Neapolitans, and
retreat of
Mack.

Dec. 10.

Dec. 12.

¹ Th. x. 195,
197. Jom.
xi. 52, 55,
57. Bot. iii.
141. 147.
Ann. Reg.
131.

Instructed by this disaster, both in regard to the miserable quality of his own troops and the ruinous selection he had made of the point of attack, Mack resolved upon a different disposition of his forces. Leaving, therefore, Marshal Bourcard, with four thousand men, in front of Civita Castellana, he transported the main body of his army to the left bank of the Tiber, with the design of overwhelming Lemoine in the central and important position of Terni. This movement, which, if rapidly executed with steady troops, might have been attended with decisive success, became, from the slowness with which it was performed, and the wretched quality of the soldiers to whom it was intrusted, the source of irreparable disasters. General Metch, who commanded his advanced guard, five thousand strong, having descended from the mountains and surprised Otricoli on the road to Terni, was soon assailed there by General Mathieu, and driven back to Calvi, where he was thrown into such consternation by the arrival of Kniazwitz on his flank with fifteen hundred men, that he laid down his arms, with four thousand men, though both the attacking columns did not exceed three thousand five hundred. After this check, accompanied with such disgraceful conduct on the part of the troops, Mack despaired of success, and instantly commenced his retreat towards the Neapolitan frontier. The King of Naples hastily left Rome in the night, and fled in the utmost alarm to his own capital, while Mack retired with all his forces, abandoning the Ecclesiastical States to their fate. Championnet vigorously pursued the retiring columns; the French troops entered Rome; and General Damas, cut off with three thousand men from the main body, and driven northward to Orbitello, concluded a convention with Kellermann, by which it was agreed that they should evacuate the Tuscan States without being considered as prisoners of war. Seventeen days after the opening of the campaign, the Neapolitan troops were expelled at all points from the Ecclesiastical territory;¹ Rome was again

in the hands of the Republicans; eighteen thousand veterans had driven before them forty thousand men, splendidly dressed and abundantly equipped, but utterly destitute of the discipline and courage requisite to obtain success in war.

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Such was the terror inspired by these disasters, that the court of Naples did not conceive themselves in safety even in their own capital. On the 21st December, the royal family, during the night, withdrew on board Nelson's fleet, and embarked for Sicily, taking with them the most valuable effects in the palaces at Naples and Caserta, the chief curiosities in the museum of Portici, and above a million in specie from the public treasury. The inhabitants of the capital were thrown into the utmost consternation when they learned in the morning that the royal family and ministers had all fled, leaving to them the burden of maintaining a disastrous and ruinous contest with France. Nothing, of course, could be expected from the citizens, when the leaders of the state had been the first to show the example of desertion. The revolutionary spirit immediately broke out in the democratic part of the community; rival authorities were constituted, the dissensions of party paralysed the efforts of the few who were attached to their country, and everything seemed to promise an easy victory to the invaders.¹

99.
The Neapolitan court take refuge on board the English fleet.

Dec. 21.

¹ Jom. xi. 60, 61. Th. x. 199. Lac. xiv. 234. Bot. iii. 154, 155.

Meanwhile Championnet was engaged in preparations for the conquest of Naples—an object which, considered in a military point of view, required little more than vigour and capacity, but which, politically, could not fail to be highly injurious to the interests of France, by the demonstration it would afford of the insatiable nature of the spirit of propagandism by which its government was actuated, and the dispersion of its military force over the whole extent of the peninsula which it would produce. The sagacity of Napoleon was never more clearly evinced than in the resistance which he made to the tempting offers made to him in his first campaign for the conquest

100.
Championnet resolves to invade Naples. His plan of operations.

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of Rome ; and the wisdom of his resolution was soon manifested by the disastrous effects which followed the extension of the French forces into the extremity of Naples, when they had the whole weight of Austria to expect on the Adige. Untaught by the ruinous consequences of an undue dispersion of force by the Austrian commander, Championnet fell into precisely the same error in the invasion of the Neapolitan dominions. He had at his disposal, after deducting the garrisons of Rome and Ancona, twenty-one thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry, having received considerable reinforcements from the north of Italy since the contest commenced. This force he divided into five columns : on the extreme right, Rey, with two thousand five hundred infantry and eight hundred cavalry, was ordered to advance by the Pontine marshes to Terracina, while Macdonald, with seven thousand foot and three hundred horse, pushed forward to Ciprano ; Lemoine, with four thousand infantry and two hundred cavalry, was directed to move upon Sulmona ; while seven thousand infantry and two hundred horse, under Duhesme, ascended the course of the Pescara to Popoli, where they were to effect their junction with the division of Lemoine. The object of these complicated movements was to assemble a formidable force in front of Capua and along the stream of the Volturnus ; but the difficulty of uniting the different columns, after a long march in a mountainous and rugged country, was so great that, had they been opposed by an enemy of skill and resolution, they would have experienced the fate of Wurmser, when he divided his army in presence of Napoleon on the opposite sides of the lake of Garda.¹

¹ Jom. xi.
61, 65. Bot.
iii. 150, 151.

101.
His surprising success.

Notwithstanding their perilous dispersion of force, the invading army at all points met with surprising success. The divisions under Rey and Macdonald found Mack posted with twenty-five thousand men in a strong position behind the Volturnus, stretching from Castella Mare to Scaffa di Cajazzo, having Capua, with its formidable ram-

parts, in the centre, and both its wings covered by a numerous artillery. But nothing could induce the Neapolitan troops to face the enemy. After a sharp skirmish, their advanced guard abandoned the wooded cliffs of Itri, and fled through their almost impregnable thickets to Gaeta, the strongest place in the Neapolitan dominions, but which surrendered with its garrison, three thousand six hundred strong, on the first summons of General Rey, with an inferior force. The troops in the rear, behind the Volturnus, seized with an unaccountable panic, at the same time abandoned their position and artillery, and sought refuge under the cannon of Capua. Thither they were pursued in haste by Macdonald's division; but the guns of the ramparts opened upon his troops so terrible a fire of grape-shot, that they were repulsed with great slaughter; and had the Neapolitan cavalry obeyed Mack's order to charge at that critical moment, that division of the French army might have been totally destroyed.¹

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XXV.

1798.

¹ Jom. xi.
65, 66. Bot.
iii. 157. Th.
x. 200.

But though the junction of the divisions of Rey and Macdonald, and the capture of Gaeta, gave Championnet a solid footing on the great road from Rome to Naples, in front of the Volturnus, his situation was daily becoming more critical. For more than a week no intelligence had been received from the other divisions of the army; the detachments sent out to gain intelligence, found all the mountain-passes in the interior of the Abruzzi choked up with snow, and the villages in a state of insurrection; Itri, Fondi, and all the posts in the rear of the army, soon fell into the hands of the peasants, who evinced a courage which afforded a striking contrast to the pusillanimity of the regular forces. The victorious division was insulated in the midst of its conquests. At the same time, the insurrection of the rural districts, in support of the monarchy, spread with the utmost rapidity in the whole level fields of the Terra di Lavoro; a large assemblage of armed peasants collected at Sessa, the bridge

102.
Critical
situation of
Cham-
pionnet
in front of
Capua.

Jan. 6.

over the Volturnus was broken down, and all the insulated

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

¹ Jom. ix.
67, 70. Bot.
ii. 157, 158.
Th. x. 200.
Hard. vii.
133, 134.

detachments of the army were assailed with a fury very different from the languid operations of the regular forces. Had Mack profited by his advantages, and made a vigorous attack with his whole centre upon Macdonald's division, there is reason to think that, notwithstanding the pusillanimity of his troops, he might have forced them to a disastrous retreat.¹

103.
Mack proposes an armistice, which is gladly accepted.

But the Austrian general had now lost all confidence in the forces under his command; and the vacillation of the provisional government at Naples gave him no hopes of receiving support from the rear in the event of disaster. An attempt against the mountains of Cajazzo with a few battalions failed; Damas had not yet arrived with the troops from Tuscany; of nine battalions, routed at the passage of the Volturnus, none but the officers had entered Naples, the common men having all disappeared; and he was aware that a powerful party, having ramifications in his own camp, was disposed to take advantage of the vicinity of the French army to overturn the royal authority. Rendered desperate by these untoward circumstances, he resolved to make the most of the critical situation of the invaders, by proposing an armistice. The situation of Championnet had become so hazardous, from the failure of provisions and the increasing boldness of the insurgents, that the proposal was accepted with joy, and an armistice for two months was agreed to, on condition that 2,500,000 francs should be paid in fifteen days, and the fortresses of Capua, Acerra, and Benevento, delivered up to the French forces. Thus, by the extraordinary pusillanimity of the Italian troops, was the French general delivered from a situation all but hopeless, and an army, which ran the most imminent danger of passing through the Caudine forks, enabled to dictate a glorious peace to its enemies. Shortly after the conclusion of the convention, Mack, disgusted with the conduct of his soldiers, and finding that they were rapidly melting away by desertion, resigned the command and retired to Naples.²

Jan. 11.

² Bot. iii.
158, 160.
Jom. xi. 72,
73. Th. x.
200. Hard.
vii. 134, 139.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

104.

Description
of Naples—
beauty of
its bay.

NAPLES—a city so celebrated in poetry and romance, that every one must have formed some idea of it, though none can probably equal the reality—is situated, like Algiers and Genoa, on a steep declivity, rising in some places abruptly from the water's edge. The largest city in Italy, it contains 364,000 inhabitants, besides 20,000 strangers who are always within its walls; but, great as this number is, the impression produced by the concourse of persons in the streets is still greater, from the indolent habits of a large proportion of the lower orders, and the benignity of the climate, which enables them to spend the most of their time in the open air. No city in the world, except perhaps Rio Janeiro, is placed on so enchanting a situation. It stands on the coast of a region so richly endowed by the gifts of nature, that in every age it has inspired the imagination of poetry, and formed the fabled Elysium of ancient genius.* Built on a succession of hills rising from the water's edge, to the height of two hundred and fifty feet, in the centre of a deep bay, fifty miles round, it both commands the most beautiful marine views in the world, and is placed on so commanding an elevation as to afford every facility for enjoying them. On the right hand, looking from Naples, are to be seen the hills of Baia, the abode of Roman opulence; the point of Mycenum, the principal station of their fleet; the wooded slopes surrounding the Lake of Avernus; the bold rocks of Pozzuoli; the lofty peaks of Ischia. On the left, Vesuvius rises in solitary majesty from amidst the plain which its ashes have fertilised, and the cities which its eruptions have overthrown.¹ In front, the noble moun-

¹ Personal
observation.
Malte-
Brun, vii.
426.

* “Qui partorir le terre; e 'n più graditi
Frutti non culte germogliar le viti.
Qui non fallaci mai fiorir gli olivi,
E 'l mel dicea stillar dall' elci cave;
E scender giù da lor montagne i rivi
Con acque dolci, e mormorio soave;
E zefiri e rugiade i raggi estivi
Temprarvi sì, che nullo ardor v' è grave:
E qui gli Elisi campi, e le famose
Stanze delle beate anime pose.”—Tasso, *Gerus. Liber*. xv. 36.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

105.
Romantic
character of
the city
itself.

tains of Sorrento form a romantic background to the scene, at the extremity of which the rocks of Capri, the retreat of Tiberius, gradually dip down, till they are lost in the level expanse of the ocean.

Varied and romantic, however, as is this background of the scene, it is not on it that the eye of the traveller is chiefly riveted. The Bay itself, reflecting, as it almost always does, the unclouded blue of heaven, and traversed by hundreds of barks and feluccas, with snowy sails, of the lightest and most elegant forms, is still more attractive. The aspect of the massy structures of the capital, which crowd down to the water's edge; their flat roofs, which give an Oriental character to the scene; the huge ramparts of the Castel del Uovo, resting on rocky islands at the mouth of the harbour; the bold battlements of the Fort St Elmo, which occupies the highest part of the ridge, and surmounts all the other buildings in the city: the beautiful terrace of the Chiaja, stretching out on the sea-coast towards Baia, the abode of wealth and rank, form a succession of objects so lovely, and yet so varied, as altogether to entrance the spectator. It is more romantic than Constantinople, from the superior elevation and more rugged summits of the mountains which form the background of the landscape; and more varied and perfect than Genoa, from the adjoining heights and ranges enclosing the bay more completely, and giving it more the character of an inland lake. Whoever has had the good fortune to see this enchanting spectacle, with the glow of sunset gilding the waves, and illuminating the palaces, will cease to wonder at the enthusiasm of the Italians, which has given rise to the proverb, "Vedi Napoli, e poi muori!"* Nor are the associations of genius wanting to this matchless scene. In those rocks, on the right, is to be found the tomb of Virgil; at the foot of that mountain, on the left, Pliny perished; on those cliffs, in front, Salvator studied; on the reverse of those blue hills Tasso was born.¹

¹ Personal observation. Malte-Brun, vii. 420, 421.

* "See Naples, and then die."

Indolent, poor, and half savage in their habits, the lower orders of Naples, who are called Lazzaroni, form a peculiar class, unlike those who are to be met with in any other city. They are exceedingly numerous, and embrace not less than sixty thousand persons capable of bearing arms. Almost the whole of this vast population are in a state of extreme poverty; they can hardly be said to have a home in the wretched hired rooms, destitute of furniture, in which they find shelter during the night; all day long they lounge about the quays, the streets, the harbour, seeking a scanty subsistence as boatmen, porters, common labourers, or beggars; and when none of these modes of earning a livelihood occur, they enjoy, what to the Italians is so dear, the "dolce fare niente." Hardy, patient, and enduring, they can, when excited to exertion, endure alike the extremes of heat and cold; they are equally proof against the burning sirocco of Africa and the frozen winter of Russia.* Enjoying a delicious climate, they are strangers to the vice of intoxication: a glass of iced water is the luxury they most highly prize; reposing in the shade and gazing on the bay, the pleasure to which they most willingly revert. Ignorant, and yet excitable, they are superstitious, credulous, and guided by their priests; irritable and revengeful, they have all the well-known vices of the Italian character. When properly directed, however, and roused to worthy purposes, they are capable of great and strenuous efforts; and exhibited a memorable proof of the truth which history in all ages has demonstrated, that in an opulent and corrupted society, it is in the lowest class that patriotic virtue last lingers.¹

Though not regularly fortified, Naples is a city which, in the hands of resolute men, is very susceptible of defence. Being built entirely of stone, it is in some degree proof against the terrors of a bombardment; and though the

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

106.

Peculiar
character of
the lazzar-
oni of
Naples.¹ Personal
observation.
Malte-
Brun, vii.
420, 421.107.
Its capabili-
ties for de-
fence.

* When Napoleon left Smorgoni on 3d December 1812, to proceed to Paris after the passage of the Berezina, he was escorted by fifty Neapolitan hussars, almost the only horsemen in the Grand Army equal to that duty.—CHAMBRAY, *Campagne de 1812*, iii. 107.

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XXV.

1798.

quarters next the Campagna Felice would easily fall into the hands of a numerous and enterprising enemy, yet their possession would neither insure that of the remainder of the city, nor form an acquisition tenable in itself against an enemy who still held the upper part of the city, and was resolute to defend it. The guns from Fort St Elmo command it in every part; bombs from that fortress would speedily render any quarter wellnigh untenable; its solid ramparts are proof against a coup-de-main; and regular approaches would be difficult in a vicinity encumbered with lofty stone edifices or composed of arid rock. Above all, the desperate and reckless character of the lower classes, as well as their extraordinary enthusiasm, when once strongly excited, rendered it not unlikely that, after the gates of the city were forced, a desperate warfare might be maintained in the streets, and a murderous fire of musketry descend from the lofty buildings in the interior of the city upon the bold assailants who should venture into its narrow and intricate enclosures.¹

¹ Bot. iii.
159, 160.
Jom. xi. 74.
Hard. vii.
139.

108.
Indignation
which the
armistice
excites
among the
Neapolitan
populace.

The intelligence of this armistice excited the utmost indignation among the populace of that capital, whose inhabitants, like all others of Greek descent, were extremely liable to vivid impressions, and totally destitute of the information requisite to form a correct judgment on the chance of success. The discontent was raised to the highest pitch by the arrival of the French commissaries appointed to receive payment of the first instalment of the contribution stipulated by the convention. The popular indignation was now worked up to a perfect fury. The lazzaroni flew to arms; the regular troops refused to act against the insurgents; the cry arose that they had been betrayed by the viceroy, the general, and the army; and the people, assembling in multitudes, exclaimed, "Long live our holy faith! Long live the Neapolitan people!"² In the midst of the general confusion, the viceroy and the provisional government fled to Sicily; for three days the city was a prey to all the horrors of

² Th. x. 201.
Bot. iii. 160,
161, Jom.
xi. 74.

anarchy; and the tumult was only appeased by the appointment of Prince Moliterno and the Duke of Bocca Romana as chiefs of the insurrection, who engaged to give it a direction that might save the capital from the ruin with which it was threatened.

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1798.

Meanwhile, the French divisions in the Abruzzi having fortunately effected their junction with the main army on the Volturnus, Championnet advanced in three columns, with all his forces, towards Naples; while Mack, whose life was equally threatened by the furious lazzaroni and his own soldiers, sought safety in the French camp. Championnet had the generosity to leave him his sword, and treat him with the hospitality due to his misfortunes: an admirable piece of courtesy, which the Directory showed they were incapable of appreciating, by ordering him to be detained a prisoner of war. As the French army approached Naples, the fury of the parties against each other increased in violence, and the insurrection of the lazzaroni assumed a more formidable character. Distrusting all their leaders of rank and property, whose weakness had in truth proved that they were unworthy of confidence, they deposed Prince Moliterno and the Duke of Bocca Romana, and elected two simple lazzaroni, Paggio and Michel le Fou, to be their leaders. Almost all the shopkeepers and burghers, however, being attached to democratic principles, desired a revolutionary government; and to these were now added nearly the whole class of proprietors, who were justly afraid of general pillage, if the unruly defenders, to whom their fate was unhappily intrusted, should prove successful. The quarters of Championnet, in consequence, were besieged by deputations from the more opulent citizens, who offered to assist his forces in effecting the reduction of the capital; but the French general, aware of the danger of engaging a desperate population in the streets of a great city, refused to advance till Fort St Elmo, which commands the town, was put into the hands of the partisans of the Republic. This assurance having

109.

Advance of
the French
against
Naples.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

¹ Jom. xi.
76, 79. Th.
x. 202. Bot.
iii. 162, 163.
Hard. vii.
139, 144,
149.

110.
Desperate
resistance of
the lazzar-
oni, and
frightful
combats
before the
capital.

at length being given, he put all his forces in motion, and advanced in three columns against the city. At the same time he issued a proclamation to the Neapolitan people, in which he said, "Be not alarmed, we are not your enemies. The French punish unjust and haughty kings; but they bear no arms against the people. Those who show themselves friends of the Republic will be secured in their persons and property, and experience only its protection. Disarm the perfidious wretches who excite you to resistance. You will change your institutions for those of a republican form: I am about to establish a provisional government." In effect a revolutionary committee was immediately organised at the French headquarters, having at its head Charles Laubert, a furious republican, and formerly one of the warmest partisans of Robespierre.¹

But the lazzaroni of Naples, brave and enthusiastic, were not intimidated by his approach, and, though deserted by their king, their government, their army, and their natural leaders, prepared with undaunted resolution to defend their country. Acting with inconceivable energy, they at once drew the artillery from the arsenals to guard the avenues to the city, commenced intrenchments on the heights which commanded its different approaches, armed the ardent multitude with whatever weapons chance threw in their way, barricaded the principal streets, and stationed guards at all the important points in its vast circumference. The few regular troops who had not deserted their colours were formed into a reserve, consisting of four battalions and a brigade of cannoneers. The zeal of the populace was inflamed by means of a nocturnal procession of the head and blood of St Januarius around the city, and the enthusiastic multitude issued in crowds from the gate to face the conquerors of Italy. The combat which ensued was one of the most extraordinary of the revolutionary war, fruitful as it was in events of unprecedented character. For three days the battle lasted, between Aversa and Capua,

—on the one side, numbers, resolution, and enthusiasm; on the other, discipline, skill, and military experience. Often the Republican ranks were broken by the impetuous charges of their infuriated opponents; but these transient moments of success led to no lasting result, from the want of any reserve to follow up the advantage, and the disorder into which any rapid advance threw the tumultuary ranks. Still crowd after crowd succeeded. As the assailants were swept down by volleys of grape-shot, new multitudes rushed forward. The plain was covered with the dead and the dying; and the Republicans, weary with the work of slaughter, slept that night beside their guns, within pistol-shot of their indomitable opponents. At length, the artillery and skill of the French prevailed; the Neapolitans were driven back into the city, still resolved to defend it to the last extremity.¹

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XXV.

1799.

21st and
22d Jan.

¹ Bott. iii.
162, 165.
Jom. xi. 79,
80. Lac.
xiv. 242.
Hard. vii.
151, 153.

A terrible combat ensued at the gate of Capua. The Swiss battalion, which, with two thousand lazzaroni, was intrusted with the defence of that important post, long resisted all the efforts of the Republicans. Two attacks were repulsed with great slaughter, and at length the chief of the staff, Thiébault, only succeeded in making himself master of the entrance by feigning a retreat, and thus drawing the inexperienced troops from their barricades into the plain, where they were charged with the bayonet by the French, who entered the gate pell-mell with the fugitives. Still, however, they made good their ground in the streets. The Republicans found they could expel the besieged from their fastnesses only by burning down or blowing up the edifices, and their advance through the city was rendered almost impracticable by the mountains of slain which choked up the causeway. But while this heroic resistance was going on at the gates, a body of the citizens, attached to the French party, made themselves masters of the fort of St Elmo, and the Castello del Uovo, and immediately sending

111.
The French
force the
gates and
forts;
bloody con-
flicts in the
streets.

CHAP.
XXV.

1799.

Jan. 23.

intimation to Championnet, a body of troops was moved forward, and these important posts taken possession of by his soldiers. The lazzaroni shed tears of despair when they beheld the tricolor flag waving on the last strongholds of their city; but still the resistance continued with unabated resolution. Championnet upon this gave orders for a general attack. Early on the morning of the 23d, the artillery from the castle of St Elmo showered down cannon-shot upon the city, and dense columns of infantry approached all the avenues to its principal quarters. Notwithstanding the utmost resistance, they made themselves masters of the fort del Carmine; but Kellermann was held in check by a chief of the lazzaroni, named Paggio, near the Seraglio. The roofs of the houses were covered with armed men; showers of balls, flaming combustibles, and boiling water fell from the windows; and all the other columns were repulsed with great slaughter, when an accidental circumstance put an end to the strife, and gave the French the entire command of Naples. Michel le Fou, the lazzaroni leader, having been made prisoner, was conducted to the headquarters of the French general, and having been kindly treated, offered to mediate between the contending parties. Peace was speedily established. The French soldiers exclaimed, "Vive St Janvier!" the Neapolitans, "Vivent les Français!" A guard of honour was given to St Januarius; and the populace passing, with the characteristic levity of their nation, from one extreme to another, embraced the French soldiers with whom they had so recently been engaged in mortal strife.¹*

¹ Bot. iii.
166, 169.
Jom. xi. 84,
85. Lac.
xiv. 243,
244. Hard.
vii. 159, 175.

No sooner was the reduction of Naples effected, than the lazzaroni were disarmed, the castles which command

* The most contumelious proclamations against the reigning family immediately covered the walls of Naples. In one of them it was said, "Who is the Capet who pretends to reign over you, in virtue of the investiture of the Pope? Who is the crowned scoundrel who dares to govern you? Let him dread the fate of his relative who crushed by his despotism the rising liberty of the Gauls. CHAMPIONNET."—HARD. vii. 172, 173.

the city garrisoned by French troops, royalty abolished, and a new democratic state, called the *Parthenopeian Republic*, proclaimed in its stead. In the outset a provisional government of twenty-one members was appointed. Their first measure was to levy upon the exhausted inhabitants of the capital a contribution of 12,000,000 of francs, or £480,000, and upon the remainder of the kingdom one of 15,000,000 francs, or £600,000—burdens which were felt as altogether overwhelming in that poor country, and were rendered doubly oppressive by the unequal manner in which they were levied, and the additional burden of feeding, clothing, lodging, and paying the invading troops, to which the inhabitants were at the same time subjected. Shortly after, there arrived Faypoult, the commissary of the Directory, who instantly sequestrated all the royal property, all the estates of the monasteries, the whole banks containing the property of individuals, the allodial lands, of which the king was only administrator, and even the curiosities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, though still buried in the bowels of the earth. Championnet, ashamed of this odious proceeding, suspended the decree of the Assembly; upon which he was immediately recalled, indicted for his disobedience, and Macdonald intrusted with the supreme command; while a commission of twenty-five members was appointed to draw up a constitution for the new republic. The constitution which they framed was, as might have been anticipated, fraught with the grossest injustice, and totally unsuitable to the circumstances of the country. Jacobin clubs were established; the right of election was confined to colleges of electors named by government; the people were deprived of the free franchise which they had inherited from the ancient customs; a national guard was established, in which not three hundred men were ever enrolled; and finally, a decree passed, which declared that in every dispute between the barons and individuals, judgment should, with-

CHAP.
XXV.

1799.

112.

Establish-
ment of the
Partheno-
peian re-
public.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

out investigation, be given in favour of the private citizen! But amidst these frantic proceedings, the French generals and civil authorities did not lose sight of their favourite objects, public and private plunder. The arsenals, palaces, and private houses were pillaged without mercy; all the bronze cannon which could be found, were melted down and sold; and the Neapolitan democrats had even the mortification of seeing the beautiful statues of the same metal, which adorned the streets of their capital, disposed of to the highest bidder, to fill the pockets of their republican allies. The utmost discontent immediately ensued among all classes; the patriots broke out into vehement exclamations against the perfidy and avarice of their deliverers; and the democratic government soon became more odious even to the popular party than the regal authority by which it had been preceded.¹

¹ Bot. iii.
172, 177.
Jom. xi. 318.
319. Hard.
vii. 178, 187.

113.
State of
Ireland.
Reflections
on the me-
lancholy
history of
that coun-
try.

While Italy, convulsed by democratic passions, was thus everywhere falling under the yoke of the French Directory, Great Britain underwent a perilous crisis of its fate; and the firmness and intrepidity of British patriotism was finely contrasted with the insanity of Continental democracy, and the vacillation of Continental resolution. Ireland was the scene of danger; the theatre, in so many periods of English history, of oppressive or unfortunate legislation on the side of government, and of fierce and blindfold passions on the part of the people. In surveying the annals of this unhappy country, it appears impossible at first sight to explain the causes of its sufferings by any of the known principles of human nature. Severe and conciliatory policy seem to have been equally unavailing to heal its wounds. Conquest has failed in producing submission, severity in enforcing tranquillity, indulgence in awakening gratitude. The irritation excited by the original subjugation of the island seems to be unabated after the lapse of five centuries; the indulgence with which it has often been treated has led uniformly only

to increased exasperation, and more formidable insurrections; and the greater part of the suffering which it has so long undergone, appears to have arisen from the measures of severity rendered necessary by the excitation of popular passion consequent on every attempt to return to a more lenient system of government.

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XXV.

1798.

The first British sovereign who directed his attention to the improvement of Ireland was James I. He justly boasted that there would be found the true theatre of his glory, and that he had done more in a single reign for the improvement of that important part of the empire, than all his predecessors, from the days of Henry II. Instead of increased tranquillity and augmented gratitude, there broke out, shortly after, the dreadful rebellion of 1641, which was only extinguished by Cromwell in oceans of blood. A severe and oppressive code was imposed soon after the Revolution in 1688, and under it the island remained discontented, indeed, but comparatively tranquil, for a hundred years. The more galling parts of this code were removed by the beneficent policy of George III. From 1780 to 1798 was an uninterrupted course of improvement, concession, and removal of disability, and this indulgent policy was immediately followed by the rebellion of 1798. Ireland has always been treated by England with indulgence in taxation, with generosity in beneficence. She never paid either the income or assessed taxes, so long felt as oppressive in Great Britain; and the sums bestowed by the English government annually upon Irish charities have, for the last half century, varied from £200,000 to £300,000. The last fetters of restriction were struck off by the Catholic Relief Bill in 1829, and the exasperation, discontent, and violence in Ireland, which immediately followed, have been unprecedented in the long course of its humiliated existence. All the promises of tranquillity so often held forth by its advocates were falsified, and half a century of unbroken indulgence was succeeded by the fierce demand for the repeal of the

114.
Great effects
of the rule
of James I.
in Ireland.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

115.

Causes of
this failure
of all at-
tempts to
pacify it.
Confiscation
of its land.

Union, and a degree of anarchy, devastation, and bloodshed, unparalleled in any Christian land.*

These effects are so much at variance with what was predicted and expected to arise from such conciliatory measures, that many able observers have not hesitated to declare them inexplicable, and to set down Ireland as an exception to all the ordinary principles of human nature. A little consideration, however, of the motives which influence mankind on such occasions, and the state of society in which they were called into operation, will be sufficient to demonstrate that this is not the case, and that the continued turbulence of Ireland is the natural result of these principles acting in peculiar and almost unprecedented circumstances. The first evil which has attached to Ireland was the original and subsequent confiscation of so large a portion of the landed property, and its acquisition by persons of a different country, habits, and religion, from the great body of the inhabitants. In the successive insurrections which that country has witnessed, since the English standard first approached its shores, nearly all its landed property has been confiscated, and lavished either on the English nobility, or companies or individuals of English extraction. Above eight millions of acres were bestowed away in this manner upon the adventurers and soldiers of fortune who followed the standard of Cromwell.¹ It is the great extent of this cruel and unjust measure which has been the original cause of the disasters of Ireland, by nourishing profound feelings of hatred in the descendants of the dispossessed proprietors, and introducing a body of men into the country, necessarily dependent for their existence upon the exclusion of the heirs of the original owners from the inheritance of their forefathers.

But other countries have been subjected to landed confiscation as well as Ireland; nearly all the land of England

* At this moment (June 1843) tranquillity is only preserved in Ireland by 26,000 British soldiers; and the untaxed Irish are assembling in meetings of 150,000 and 200,000 persons, to demand the repeal of the Union.

¹ Lingard,
xi. 136, and
xii. 74.

was transferred, first from the Britons to the Saxons, and thence from the Saxons to the Normans; the lands of Gaul were almost entirely, in the course of five centuries, wrested by the Franks from the native inhabitants;¹ and yet upon that foundation have been reared the glories of English civilisation and the vigour of the French monarchy. Other causes, therefore, must be looked for, coexisting with or succeeding these, which have prevented the healing powers of nature from closing there, as elsewhere, that ghastly wound, and perpetuated to distant ages the irritation and the animosities consequent on the first bitterness of conquest. These causes are to be found in the unfortunate circumstance, that Ireland was not the seat, like England or Gaul, of the permanent residence of the victorious nation; that absent proprietors, and their necessary attendants, middlemen, arose from the fact of the kingdom having been subjugated by a race of conquerors who were not to make it their resting-place; and that a different religion was subsequently embraced by the victors from the faith of the vanquished, and the bitterness of religious animosity superadded to the causes of discontent arising from civil distinction. The same progress was beginning in Scotland after the country was overrun by Edward I., when it was arrested by the vigorous efforts of her unconquerable people; five centuries of experienced obligation have not yet fully developed the incalculable consequences of the victory of Bannockburn, or stamped adequate celebrity on the name of Robert Bruce.

Great as were these causes of discontent, and deeply as they had poisoned the fountains of national prosperity, they might yet have been obliterated in process of time, and the victors and vanquished settled down, as in France and England, into one united people, had it not been for another circumstance, to which sufficient attention has not yet been paid—viz. the incessant agitation and vehemence of party strife, arising from the extension, perhaps un-

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

116.

Peculiar
causes
which have
aggravated
this evil in
Ireland.

¹ Guizot,
Essais sur
l'Histoire
de France,
178, 179.

117.
The Irish
are as yet
unfit for
free privi-
leges.

CHAP.
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avoidable from the connexion with England, of the forms of a free and representative government to a people who are in a state of civilisation unfit for either. The fervid and passionate character of the Irish peasantry, which they share more or less with all nations in an infant state of civilisation, and, still more, of unmixed Celtic descent, is totally inconsistent with the calm consideration and deliberate judgment requisite for the due exercise of political rights. The duties of grand and common jurymen, of electors for representatives to parliament, of burghers choosing their own magistrates, and of citizens uniting in public meetings, cannot as yet be fitly exercised by a large portion of the Irish people. From the periodical recurrence of such seasons of excitation has arisen the perpetuating of popular passions, and the maintenance of party strife, with the extinction of which alone can habits of industry or good order be expected to arise. Continued despotism might have healed the wounds of Ireland in a few generations, by extinguishing the passions of the people with the power of indulging them. But the alternations of severity and indulgence which they have experienced under the popular British government, like a similar course pursued to a spoiled child, have fostered rather than diminished the public discontent, by giving the power of complaint without removing its causes, and prolonging the sense of suffering by perpetuating the passions from which it has arisen.

118.
Which is the
real cause of
their misery.

This explains the otherwise unaccountable circumstance, that all the most violent ebullitions of Irish insurrection have taken place shortly after the greatest boons had been conferred upon them by the British legislature, and that the severest oppression of which they complain is not that of the English government, whose conduct towards them for the last forty years has been singularly gentle and beneficent, but of their own native magistracy, from whose vindictive or reckless proceedings their chief miseries are said to have arisen. A people in such circumstances are

almost as incapable of bearing the excitements of political change, or the exercise of political power, as the West India Negroes or the Bedouins of Arabia. Hence the fanatical temper of the English nation, in the reign of Charles I., speedily generated the horrors of the Tyrone rebellion; the excitement of French democracy, in the close of the eighteenth century, gave rise to the insurrection of the United Irishmen; and the party agitation set on foot to effect Catholic Emancipation, the removal of tithes, and the repeal of the Union, has produced in our own times a degree of animosity and discord on its peopled shores, which bids fair to throw it back for half a century in the career of real freedom.*

Following out the system which they uniformly adopted towards the states which they wished to overthrow, whether by open hostility or secret propagandism, the French government had for years held out hopes to the Irish malcontents, and by every means in their power sought to widen the breach, already, unhappily, too great, between the native and the English population. This was no difficult task. The Irish were already sufficiently disposed to ally themselves with any enemy who promised to liberate them from the odious yoke of the Saxons; and the dreams of liberty and equality which the French spread wherever they went, and which turned so many of the strongest heads in Europe, proved altogether intoxicating to their ardent and enthusiastic minds. From the

119.
Intimate union formed by the Irish malcontents with France.

* The serious crimes in Ireland during the last three months of 1829, were—

(The Emancipation Bill passed in March,)	300
Do. of 1830,	499
Do. of 1831 (Reform Agitation,)	814
Do. of 1832 (Tithe and Repeal Agitation,)	1513

The crimes reported in Ireland in the year 1831 were 16,669, of which 210 were murders; 1478 robberies; burning houses, 466; attacks on houses, 2296; burglaries, 531; robbery of arms, 678. The crimes reported in England in the same year were 19,647. The population of England and Wales in 1831, was 13,894,000; that of Ireland, 7,784,000. See *Parl. Returns*, 14th March 1833, 8th May 1833, and *Population Census*, 1833. By the Coercion Act the serious crimes were at once reduced to a fourth part, or nearly so, of these numbers. 8th May, 1833.

—See HANSARD, *Parl. Deb.* Feb. 9, 1834.

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¹ Wolfe
Tone, ii. 187,
191. Ann.
Reg. 153,
157. Jom.
xi. 428, 429.

120.
Revolution-
ary organi-
sation esta-
blished
throughout
Ireland.

beginning of the Revolution, accordingly, its progress was watched with intense anxiety in Ireland. All the horrors of the Reign of Terror failed in opening the eyes of its inhabitants to its real tendency; and the greater and more enterprising part of the Catholic population, who constituted above three-fourths of its entire inhabitants, soon became leagued together for the establishment of a republic in alliance with France, the severance of all connexion with England, the restoration of the Catholic religion, and the resumption of the forfeited lands.¹

But although the Catholics in the end formed the chief supporters of the Irish insurrection, it was not among them that it first began. The malady made its earliest appearance among the inhabitants of Ulster, the province of Ireland which contains the largest number of Protestants—a certain proof that the disaffection was in the outset political, not religious. It soon, however, assumed the latter character. From Ulster it spread to Leinster; it afterwards took possession of Munster, and ultimately extended itself to Connaught. The persons enrolled in the secret societies, which formed the basis of the conspiracy, were ere long above two hundred thousand. The system by which this immense insurrection was organised was one of the most simple, and, at the same time, one of the most efficacious, that ever was devised. Persons were sworn into an association in every part of Ireland, called the Society of United Irishmen, the real objects of which were kept a profound secret, while the ostensible ones were those best calculated to allure the populace. No meeting was allowed to consist of more than twelve members; five of these meetings were represented by five members in a committee, vested with the management of all their affairs. From each of these committees a deputy attended in a superior body; one or two deputies from these composed a county committee; two from every county committee a provincial one; and these last elected five persons to superintend the whole business of the Union.

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This provisional government was elected by ballot ; and the names of its members were only communicated to the secretaries of the provincial committees, who were officially intrusted with the scrutiny of the votes. Thus, though their power was unbounded, their agency was invisible, and many hundred thousand men obeyed the dictates of an unknown authority. The military authorities were appointed in the same way. A committee of twelve chose a sergeant ; ten sergeants chose a captain ; ten captains a colonel. Secret signs were universal : the hands clasped—with the answer, the right hand to the left hip. Liberation from tithes and dues to the Protestant clergy, and the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith, formed the chief boons presented to the lower classes ; and, in order to effect these objects, it was speciously pretended that a total change of government was necessary. The real objects of the chiefs of the insurrection, which they would have had no difficulty in persuading the giddy multitude who followed their steps to adopt, were the overthrow of the British government, and the formation of a republic allied to France. Parliamentary reform was the object ostensibly held out to the country as being the one most calculated to conceal their ultimate designs, and enlist the greatest number of the respectable classes on their side. So strongly were men's minds infected with party-spirit at that period, and so completely did it obliterate the better feelings of our nature, even in the most generous minds, that these intentions were communicated to several of the Opposition party on both sides of the Channel ; and even Mr Fox, if we may believe the poetic biographer of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was no stranger to the project entertained for the dismemberment and revolutionising of the empire.^{1*}

¹ Lord Castlereagh to Duke of Portland, June 3, 1799. Castlereagh Papers, ii. 296, 325. Ann. Reg. 154, 157. Wolfe Tone, ii. 197, 201. Moore's Fitzgerald, i. 165, 166, 277. Hard. vi. 201, 202.

* "In order to settle," says Moore, "all the details of their late agreement with France, and, in fact, to enter into a formal treaty with the Directory, it was thought of importance by the United Irishmen to send some agent whose station and character should, in the eyes of their new allies, lend weight to his mission: and to Lord Edward Fitzgerald the no less delicate than daring task was assigned. About the latter end of May he passed a

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121.

Combina-
tion of
Orangemen
to uphold
British con-
nexion.

To resist this formidable combination, which, though at first political and revolutionary, soon became envenomed by the bitterness of religious dissension, another society, composed of those attached to the British government and the Protestant ascendancy, was formed, under the name of Orangemen, who soon rivalled the activity and energy of the Catholic party. Under its influence Ulster soon righted ; and that great and industrious province, in which the revolutionists at first boasted there were one hundred and fifty thousand United Irishmen, soon became so loyal in its dispositions, that, besides providing for its own defence, it could spare a large force to support the English force in the adjoining provinces. Unhappily the same vehement zeal and ardent passions, which have always characterised the Irish people, signalised their efforts. The feuds between these two great parties soon became universal : deeds of depredation, rapine, and murder, filled the land ; and it was sometimes hard to say whether most acts of violence were perpetrated by the open enemies of law and order, or its unruly defenders. But there was this essential difference between them : the combination of the Orangemen was defensive, induced by necessity ; that of the Catholics aggressive, stimulated by ambition. In this hideous domestic dissension, the British troops, under

day or two in London on his way, and dined at a Member of the House of Lords, as I have been informed by a gentlemen present, where the company consisted of Mr Fox, Mr Sheridan, and several other distinguished Whigs—all persons who had been known to *concur warmly in every step* of the popular cause in Ireland, and to whom, if Lord Edward did not give some intimation of the object of his present journey, such an effort of reserve and secrecy was, I must say, very unusual to his character. . . . It is well known that Mr Fox himself, impatient at the hopelessness of all his efforts to rid England, by any ordinary means, of a despotism which aristocratic alarm had brought upon her, found himself driven, in his despair of Reform, so near that edge where revolution begins, that had there existed at that time in England anything like the same prevalent sympathy with the new doctrines of democracy as responded throughout Ireland, there is no saying how far short of the daring aims of Lord Edward even this great constitutional leader of the Whigs *would, in the warmth of his generous zeal, have ventured.*" It is to be hoped that the biographer of the great English statesman will be able to efface the stain thus cast on his memory by the warmth of combined poetic and Irish zeal.—See MOORE'S *Fitzgerald*, i. 165, 166, 276.

very different discipline then from that which they have since attained, took at times a most discreditable part; and there remains on record a proclamation to them from Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the commander-in-chief in Ireland, characteristic alike of the honourable feelings of the general-in-chief, and the licentious excesses of some of his unworthy followers.¹ *

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¹ Castl. Papers, i. 189.
Ann. Reg. 1799, 155.

The leaders of the insurrection, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mr Arthur O'Connor, and Wolfe Tone, went over to France in June 1796, where a treaty was concluded with the French Directory, by which it was agreed that a considerable fleet and army should, in the autumn of that year, be ready for the invasion of Ireland, to enable it to throw off the connexion with England, and form a republic in alliance with France. It has been already mentioned how these expectations were thwarted, first by the dispersion of the French fleet in Bantry Bay in December 1796, and then by the glorious victory of Camperdown in 1797. The aid of fifteen thousand men was next promised for the spring of 1798, and on its faith the rebellion broke out. The vigorous efforts of government at that period, and the patriotic ardour of a large portion of the more respectable part of the people, contributed in no small degree to overawe the discontented, and postponed for a considerable period the final explosion of the insurrection.²

122.
Treaty of the Irish rebels with France.

² Ann. Reg. 158, 159.
Wolfe Tone, ii. Moore's Fitzgerald, i. 2. 77.
Hard. vi. 212, 213.
Castl. Papers, i. 363, 371.

Government, meanwhile, were by no means aware of the magnitude of the danger which threatened them. They had received only some vague information of the existence of a seditious confederacy, when there were above two hundred thousand men organised in companies and regiments in different parts of the kingdom; and the leaders were appointed by whom the insurrection was to be carried into execution in every county of the

123.
Ignorance of the English government of the danger.

* That upright officer had long before reprehended publicly, and in the severest terms, the disgraceful irregularities and licentiousness of the army in Ireland, which, he emphatically declared, "must render it formidable to every one but the enemy."—*Castlereagh Papers*, i. 189.

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island. But the defeat of the Dutch fleet at Camperdown having left the insurgents little hope of any powerful succour from France, they became desperate, and began to break out during the following winter into acts of violence in several parts of the country. From want of arms and military organisation, however, they were unable to act in large bodies, and commencing a Vendean system of warfare in the southern counties, soon compelled all the respectable inhabitants to fly to the towns to avoid massacre and conflagration. These disorders were repressed with great severity by the British troops, and the German auxiliaries in English pay. The yeomanry in the disturbed and threatened districts, forty thousand strong, turned out with undaunted courage at the approach of danger, and many cruelties were perpetrated under the British colours, which, though only a retaliation upon the insurgents of their own excesses, excited a deep feeling of revenge, and drove to desperation their furious and undisciplined multitudes.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
158, 161.
Jom. x. 429.
430. Wolfe
Tone, ii.
255, 270.
Hard. vi.
205, 206.

124.
The insur-
rection at
length
breaks out.
Feb. 19.

March 12.

The beginning of 1798 brought matters to an extremity between the contending parties. On the 19th February, Lord Moira made an eloquent speech in favour of conciliation in parliament; but the period of accommodation was past. On the same day the Irish committees came to a formal resolution, to pay no attention to any offers from either house of parliament, and to agree to no terms but a total separation from Great Britain. They were induced to take this decisive step by the representations of the French Directory, and the knowledge that an immense army, above two hundred and seventy thousand strong, under General Buonaparte, was disposed along the coast of the Channel, within twenty-four hours' march of their respective points of embarkation.* Desaix, Baraguay d'Hilliers, Kléber, Kellermann, and various

* "Of the army-list troops ordered for the expedition, 275,000 mounted and dismounted cavalry, battalion men and infantry, all are within twenty-four hours' forced march of the coast."—*Secret Paper from France, Feb. 1798; Castlereagh Papers*, i. 166.

chiefs of inferior note commanded under him. Still, though their designs were discovered, the chiefs of the conspiracy were unknown : but at length their names having been revealed by one of their own leaders, fourteen of the chiefs were arrested at Dublin. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who escaped at that time, was mortally wounded, some months after, when defending himself from arrest, after having rejected, from a generous devotion to his comrades, all the humane offers made by government to enable him to retire in safety from the kingdom. So desperate was his defence, that he wounded Ryan, the officer who seized him, with a dagger in fourteen places, though he bravely kept his hold till assistance arrived, and he was secured. The places of these leaders were filled up by subordinate authorities ; but their arrest was a fatal blow to the rebellion, by depriving it of all the chiefs of character, rank, or ability. Notwithstanding this untoward event, the insurrection broke out at once in many different parts of Ireland in the end of May. The design was to seize the castle and artillery, and surprise the camp at Dublin ; while at the same time the attention of government was to be distracted by a simultaneous rising in many different parts of Great Britain and Ireland.¹

The attempt upon Dublin was frustrated by the vigilance of the lord-lieutenant, who, a few days before it was to have taken place, had thus arrested the leaders of the conspiracy in that capital ; but in other quarters the revolt broke out with great violence. Martial law was immediately proclaimed in the counties which had become the seat of the insurrection, and under its authority punishment was inflicted upon the rebels, with a certainty and rapidity which had a surprising effect in restoring the feeling of the existence of a government, which the long train of previous disorders and uncertainty of the verdicts of juries had almost obliterated. By these means the incipient rebellion was crushed in many quarters where it

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¹ Ann. Reg.
162. Moore's
Fitzgerald,
ii. 371, 378.
Castl. Papers, i. 165,
167, 541.

125.
Various ac-
tions with
the insur-
gents, and
their total
rout at
Vinegar
Hill.
May 23.

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May 25.

June 21.

¹ Ann. Reg.
161, 165.
Jom. x. 430,
435. Hard.
vi. 217, 218.
Castl. Pa-
pers, i. 165,
167, 219,
266.

threatened to be most formidable; and it broke out seriously only in the counties of Wexford, Tipperary, and Limerick. There, however, the struggle, though short, was very violent and sanguinary. Bodies of the insurgents were worsted at Rath farm-house by Lord Roden, and at Tallanghill by the royal forces; but their principal army, fifteen thousand strong, defeated the English at Enniscorthy, captured that burgh, and soon after made themselves masters of the important town of Wexford, containing a considerable train of artillery, and opening a point of communication with France. Some alarming defections from a few regiments, chiefly filled with Irishmen, took place during these reverses. Following up their successes, they advanced against New Ross, on the confines of Kilkenny, but there they were defeated with great loss by the royal troops; and the rebels revenged themselves for the disaster, by the massacre, in cold blood, of above a hundred prisoners taken at Wexford. At Newtonbarry, after having taken and retaken the town several times, they were finally dislodged, with great loss, by the yeomanry and militia. At length, the British commanders having collected above ten thousand men in the county of Wexford, under the command of General afterwards Lord Lake, commenced a general attack on the insurgents, who were fifteen thousand strong, in their camp at Vinegar Hill. The resistance was more obstinate than could have been expected from their tumultuary masses; but, after a bloody conflict, discipline and skill prevailed over untrained valour. They were broken in several charges by the English cavalry and dispersed, leaving all their cannon, thirteen in number, and their whole ammunition, in the hands of the victors.¹

This was a mortal stroke to the rebellion. The insurgents, flying in all directions, were routed in several smaller encounters; and in a few weeks the revolt was so completely got under, that government were enabled to send Lord Cornwallis with a general amnesty for all who

submitted before a certain day, with the exception of a few leaders who were afterwards brought to justice. Such was the success of these measures that, out of sixty thousand men who were in arms at the commencement of the insurrection, there remained at the end of July only a few isolated bands in the mountains of Wicklow and Wexford. Thus was terminated a rebellion which, on its first breaking out, at so critical a time, threatened the dismemberment and ruin of the empire. It was originally a "Jacobin conspiracy throughout the kingdom, pursuing its object chiefly with Popish instruments—the heated bigotry of that sect being better suited to the purpose of the republican leaders than the cold reasoning disaffection of the northern Presbyterians."* The intentions of the rebels were sanguinary in the extreme; every man well affected to the government was to have been massacred, as well as all the officers and Protestants who were not United Irishmen. When they were successful, these frightful intentions were too faithfully carried into effect. Reprisals of the severest kind, and by the terrible means of military punishment, everywhere took place; and without adopting the computation of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's poetic biographer, who estimates the loss of lives at 30,000 on the part of the royalists, and 50,000 on that of the rebels, it may reasonably be concluded that not less than thirty thousand persons on the two sides perished in this melancholy conflict. The claims for damages, sent in to government after the rebellion was over, amounted to £1,023,000, of which £515,000 belonged to the county of Wexford. The total loss to property was not less than £3,000,000 sterling—a dreadful wound to a country possessing little industry and less wealth, but teeming with destitute inhabitants.† It was fortunate for Britain, during this danger-

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126.

Suppression
of the re-
bellion, and
imminent
danger from
which Eng-
land then
escaped.

* Lord Castlereagh to Mr Wickham, June 12, 1798, i. 219.

† "Every man that was a Protestant was called an Orangeman, and every one was to be killed, from the poorest man in the country. The women were worse than the men: they thought it no more sin to kill a Protestant than a dog. Had it not been they were so soon quashed, they would have fought with each

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¹ *Custl. Papers*, i. 152, 153; ii. 422, 423.

127.
Nugatory efforts of the Directory to revive the insurrection.

ous crisis, that the French government made no adequate attempt to support the insurrection; that they had exposed their fleets, or those of their allies, to defeat in the previous actions at St Vincent and Camperdown; and that now, instead of wounding their mortal enemy in this vulnerable point, they had sent the flower of their army, their best general, and most powerful squadron, upon a distant expedition to the coast of Africa. Confidently trusting, as every Briton must do, that the struggle between France and this country would have terminated in the overthrow of the former, even if it had taken place on our own shores, it is impossible to deny that the landing of Napoleon with forty thousand men, in the midst of the immense and discontented population of Ireland, would have led to most alarming consequences; and possibly the imminent peril to the empire might earlier have produced that burst of patriotic feeling, and development of military prowess, which was afterwards so conspicuous in the Peninsular war.¹

Awakened when too late to the importance of the opening which was thus afforded to their arms, the Directory made several attempts to rekindle the expiring flame of the insurrection. Eleven hundred men, under General Humbert, setting sail from Rochfort, landed at Killala, and, with the aid of Napper Tandy, the Irish revolutionist, speedily commenced the organisation of a provisional government, and the enrolment of revolutionary legions, in the province of Connaught.* A force of four thousand

other for the property of the Protestants: they were beginning it before the battle of Vinegar Hill. Ever since the rebellion, I never heard one of the rebels express the least sorrow for what was done: on the contrary, I have heard them say they were sorry, when they had the power, they did not kill more, and there were not half enough killed."—Confession of James Braghan, a Roman Catholic rebel, before execution for murder, 24th August 1799. *Castlereagh Papers*, ii. 422.

* The landing of the French troops was announced by two proclamations, one from the French general, the other from Napper Tandy to his countrymen. The first bore:—"United Irish! The soldiers of the great nation have landed on your shores, amply provided with arms, artillery, and munitions of all sorts, to aid you in breaking your fetters and recovering your liberties. Napper Tandy is at their head; he has sworn to break your fetters, or perish in the

men, consisting chiefly of yeomanry and militia, was defeated by this enterprising commander, with the loss of seven pieces of cannon, and six hundred prisoners,—a disaster which demonstrates the danger that would have been incurred if Napoleon, with the army of Egypt, had arrived in his stead. At length the little corps was surrounded, and compelled to surrender, after a gallant resistance, by Lord Cornwallis. A French force, consisting of the Hoche, of seventy-four guns, and eight frigates, having on board three thousand men, eluded the vigilance of the Channel fleet, and arrived on the coast of Ireland; but they were there attacked by the squadron under the command of Sir John Borlase Warren, and the whole taken after a short action, with the exception of two frigates, which regained the ports of the Republic. On board the Hoche was seized the celebrated leader Wolfe Tone, who, after having with great firmness undergone a trial for high treason, prevented a public execution by a deplorable suicide, accompanied with more than ordinary circumstances of horror. His death closed the melancholy catalogue of executions on account of this unhappy rebellion; and it is but justice to the British government to add, that although many grievous acts were perpetrated by the troops under their orders in its suppression, yet the moderation and humanity which they themselves displayed towards the vanquished were as conspicuous as the vigilance and firmness of their administration.¹

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Sept. 8.

Oct. 12.

¹ Ann. Reg.
165. Jom.
x. 440, 442.
Hard. vi.
219.

The firmness and success of the British government, attempt. To arms! freemen, to arms! the trumpet calls you; do not let your brethren perish unrevenged: if it is their destiny to fall, may their blood cement the glorious fabric of freedom." That from Napper Tandy was still more vehement:—"What do I hear? The British government talks of concessions! will you accept them? Can you for a moment entertain the thought of entering into terms with a government which leaves you at the mercy of the English soldiery, which massacres inhumanly your best citizens—with a ministry which is the pest of society and the scourge of the human race? They hold out in one hand the olive branch; look well to the other, you will see in it the hidden dagger. No, Irishmen! you will not be the dupe of such base intrigues: feeling its inability to subdue your courage, it seeks only to seduce you. But you will frustrate all its efforts. Barbarous crimes have been committed in your country; your friends have fallen victims to their devotion to your cause;

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128.
Firmness of
the British
government
at this
period.

amidst so many examples of weakness elsewhere, excited at this juncture the highest admiration on the Continent. "In the British cabinet," says Prince Hardenberg, "there was then to be seen neither irresolution nor discouragement; no symptoms of that cruel perplexity which tormented the continental sovereigns. In vain were the efforts of the Directory directed against that point of the globe, which they assailed with all their weapons, both military and revolutionary. England sustained the shock with daily increasing energy. Her dignity was untouched, her arms unconquered. The most terrible war to which an empire could be exposed, there produced less anxiety, troubles, and disquietude, than was experienced by those states which had been seduced, by the prospect of a fallacious peace, to come to terms of accommodation with the French Republic. It was with eight hundred ships of war, a hundred and fifty thousand sailors, three hundred thousand land troops, and an expenditure of fifty millions sterling a-year, that she maintained the contest. It was by periodical victories of unprecedented splendour, by drawing closer together the bonds of her constitution, that she replied to all the efforts of France to dismember her dominions. But never did she run greater danger than this year, when one expedition, directed against the East, threatened with destruction her Indian empire, and another, against the West, was destined to carry into Ireland the principles of the French Revolution, and sever that important island from the British empire."¹ *

¹ Hard. vi.
197, 198.

their shades surround you; they cry aloud for vengeance. It is your duty to avenge their death; it is your duty to strike the assassins of your friends on their bloody thrones. Irishmen! declare a war of extermination against your oppressors—the eternal war of liberty against tyranny.—NAPPER TANDY." But the conduct of this leader was far from keeping pace with these vehement protestations; for no sooner did he hear of the reverse sustained by the French corps which had landed in Killala Bay, than he re-embarked on board the French brig *Anacreon*, and got safe across the Channel.—See both proclamations in HARD. vi. 223, 225.

* It is to be hoped, should a similar unhappy contest arise, England will never show less constancy and vigour than she did in this struggle with Ire-

The maritime affairs of this year were chiefly distinguished by the capture of Minorca, which, notwithstanding the great strength of its fortifications, yielded to a British force under the command of General Stewart. In August, the inhabitants of the little island of Gozo, a dependency of Malta, revolted against the French garrison, made them prisoners to the number of three hundred, and compelled the Republicans to shut themselves up in the walls of La Valette, where they were immediately subjected to the most rigorous blockade by the British forces by land and sea.¹

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129.

Maritime
affairs of
the year.¹ Ann. Reg.
127. Jom.
x. 443.

So unbounded was the arrogance, so reckless the policy of the French government at this time, that it all but involved them in a war with the United States of North America, the country in the world in which the democratic institutions prevail to the greatest extent, and where gratitude to France was most unbounded for the services rendered to them during their contest with Great Britain. The origin of these disputes was a decree of the French government in January 1798, which directed "that all ships having for their cargoes, in whole or in part, any English merchandise, should be held lawful prize, whoever was the proprietor of that merchandise, which should be held contraband from the single circumstance of its coming from England, or any of its foreign settlements; that the harbours of France should be shut against all vessels which had so much as touched at an English harbour, and that neutral sailors found on board English vessels *should be put to death.*" This barbarous

130.

Disputes of
France with
the United
States.

land; and there can be no doubt that, in such a crisis, immediate recourse must be had to the severe but effectual restraint of martial law. The consent of all nations, the experience of all ages, has stamped this as the only effectual bridle on the insanity of rebellion. Death, in such a crisis, must be frequently and sternly inflicted; it is the necessity of having recourse to such extreme methods of coercion which renders treason the greatest of crimes. But though death is a lamentable but unavoidable necessity, *torture* is not, and military flogging is a torture of the most terrible kind. The frequent use of this dreadful instrument of the Inquisition, to force from the peasants the discovery of their concealed arms or leaders during the rebellion, can never be too much reprobated; and it is to be hoped such a remnant of barbarity will

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decree immediately brought the French into collision with the United States, who at that period were the great neutral carriers of the world. Letters of marque were issued, and an immense number of American vessels, having touched at English harbours, were brought into the French ports. The American government sent envoys to Paris, in order to remonstrate against these proceedings. They urged that the decree of the French proceeded on the oppressive principle, that because a neutral is obliged to submit to exactions from one belligerent party, from inability to prevent them, therefore it must submit to the same from the other, though neither sanctioned, as in the other case, by previous usage, nor authorised by treaty.¹

¹ Hard. vii.
34, 38, Jom.
x. 362.

131.
Shameful
rapacity of
the French
government.

The envoys could not obtain an audience of the Directory, but they were permitted to remain in Paris; and a negotiation was opened with Talleyrand and his inferior agents, which soon unfolded the real object which the French government had in view. It was intimated to the envoys that the intention of the Directory, in refusing to receive them in public, and permitting them to remain in a private capacity, was to lay the United States under a contribution, not only of a large sum as a loan to the government, but of another for the private use of the Directors. The sum required for the first object was £1,000,000, and for the last £50,000. This disgraceful proposal was repeatedly pressed upon the envoys, not only by the subaltern agents of Talleyrand, but by that minister himself, who openly avowed that nothing could be done at Paris without money, and that there was not

never again disgrace the British arms. Nothing has contributed so much to nourish that deadly hatred at the British rule, which has ever since distinguished the Irish peasantry. The constancy with which these unhappy martyrs of mistaken patriotism bore their sufferings at the halberts, in prison, on the scaffold, was as worthy of admiration as the insane ambition, which had precipitated them into such calamities, was of lasting reprobation. See a very interesting Memoir by O'CONNOR and EMMETT, 6th Sept. 1798; *Castle-reagh Papers*, i. 353-371, which contains an able and candid account of the objects, grounds of complaint, and proceedings of the rebels.

an American there who would not confirm him in this statement. Finding that the Americans resolutely resisted this proposal, they were at length informed that, if they would only "pay, by way of fees, just as they would to any lawyer who should plead their cause, the sum required for the private use of the Directory, they might remain in Paris until they had received further orders from America as to the loan required for government."* These terms were indignantly rejected; the American envoys left Paris; letters of marque were issued by the American President; all commercial intercourse with France was suspended, Washington declared generalissimo of the forces of the commonwealth, the treaties with France declared at an end, and every preparation made to sustain the national independence.¹

The Hanse Towns were not so fortunate in escaping from the exactions of the Directory. Their distance from the scene of contest, their neutrality, so favourable to the commerce of the Republic, the protection openly afforded them by the Prussian government, could not save them from French rapacity. Their ships, bearing a neutral flag, were daily captured by the French cruisers, and they obtained licenses to navigate the high seas only by the secret payment of £150,000 to the Republican rulers.²

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

May 26.
June 9.
July 7.
¹ Ann. Reg.
241, 247.
Jom. x. 363.
Hard. vi. 21.

132.
Contributions levied
on the Hanse
Towns by
the Directory.

² Jom. x.
364. Hard.
vi. 34, 38.

It was impossible, as long as the slightest hope of maintaining their independence remained to the European states, that these incessant and endless usurpations of the French government could fail to lead to a renewal

* This transaction was so extraordinary, that it is advisable to lay before the reader the official report on the subject, presented by the American plenipotentiaries to their government. "On the 18th October, the plenipotentiary Pinckney received a visit from the secret agent of M. Talleyrand (M. Bellarini.) He assured us that Citizen Talleyrand had the highest esteem for America and the citizens of the United States, and that he was most anxious for their reconciliation with France. He added, that, with that view, some of the most offensive passages in the speech of President Adams must be expunged, and a *douceur* of *L.50,000 sterling* put at the disposal of *M. Talleyrand* for the use of

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XXV.

1798.

133.

Retrospect
of the late
encroach-
ments of
France.

of the war. France began the year 1798 with three affiliated republics at her side, the Batavian, the Cisalpine, and the Ligurian. Before its close she had organised three more, the Helvetic, the Roman, and the Parthenopeian. Pursuing constantly the same system; addressing herself to the discontented multitude in every state; paralysing the national strength by a division of its population, and taking advantage of that division to overthrow its independence, she had succeeded in establishing her dominion over more than one-half of Europe. From the Texel to the extremity of Calabria, a compact chain of republics was formed, which not only threatened the independence of the other states of Europe by their military power, but promised speedily to subvert their whole social institutions by the incessant propagation of revolutionary principles. Experience had proved that the freedom which the Jacobin agents insidiously offered to the deluded population of other states, was neither more nor less than an entire subjection to the agents of France; and that, the moment that they endeavoured to obtain in reality that liberty which they had been promised in name, they were subjected to the most arbitrary and despotic oppression.¹

134.
Their sys-
tem render-
ed peace
impossible:
which leads
to a general
confederacy
against
them.

In resisting this alarming invasion not merely of the independence of nations, but of the principles which hold together the social union, it was obvious that no time was to be lost; and that the peril incurred was even greater in peace than during the utmost dangers of war. France had made more rapid strides towards universal dominion, during one year of pacific encroachment, than in six previous

the Directors; and a large loan furnished by America to France. On the 20th, the same subject was resumed in the apartments of the plenipotentiary, and on this occasion, besides the secret agent, an intimate friend of Talleyrand's was present; the expunging of the passages was again insisted on, and it was added, that, after that, money was the principal object. His words were—'We must have money, a great deal of money.' On the 21st, at a third conference, the sum was fixed at 32,000,000 (£1,280,000) as a loan, secured on the *Dutch contributions*, and a gratification of £50,000, in the form of a *douceur* to the Directors." At a subsequent meeting on the 27th October, the same secret agent said, "Gentlemen, you mistake the point: *you say nothing of the money you are*

years of hostilities. The continuance of amicable relations was favourable to the secret propagation of the revolutionary mania, with all the extravagant hopes and expectations to which it gave rise; and, without the shock of war, or an effort even to maintain the public fortunes, the independence of nations was silently melting away before the insidious but incessant efforts of democratic ambition. It was but a poor consolation to those who witnessed this deplorable progress, that they who lent an ear to these suggestions were the first to suffer from their effects, and that they subjected themselves and their country to a far worse despotism than that from which they had hoped to emancipate it. The evil was done, the national independence was subverted; revolutionary interests were created, and the principle of democracy, using the vanquished states as an advanced post, was daily proceeding to fresh conquests, and openly aimed at universal dominion. These considerations, strongly excited by the subjugation of Switzerland and the Papal States, led to a feeling, throughout all the European monarchies, of the necessity of a general coalition to resist the further encroachments of France, and stop the alarming progress of revolutionary principles. The Emperor of Russia at length saw the necessity of joining his great empire to the confederacy; and a Muscovite army, sixty thousand strong, began its march from Poland toward the north of Italy, while another, amounting to nearly forty thousand, moved toward the south of Germany.¹

The negotiations at Rastadt, notwithstanding their length and intricacy, had led to no satisfactory result.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

¹ Th. x. 146.
Lac. xiv.
311, 312.

to give. You make no offer of money. On that point you are not explicit."—"We are explicit enough," replied the American envoys: "we will not give you one farthing; and before coming here, we should have thought such an offer as you now propose would have been regarded as a mortal insult."—See the report in HARD. vi. 14, 22. When the American envoys published this statement, Talleyrand disavowed all the proceedings of these secret agents; but M. Bellarini published a declaration at Hamburg, "that he had neither said, written, nor done a single thing without the orders of Citizen Talleyrand."—*Ibid.* vi. 29.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

135.

Progress of
the negotia-
tions at
Rastadt.

Signed on
Dec. 1, 1797.

¹ Art. 12,
14. Secret
Treaty.
Corresp.
Conf. de
Nap. vii.
291, 292.

136.

The secret
understand-
ing between
France and
Austria is
made mani-
fest.

The temper in which they were conducted underwent a material change with the lapse of time. The treaty of Campo Formio was more than an ordinary accommodation; it was a league by the great powers, who there terminated their hostilities, for their own aggrandisement at the expense of their neighbours; and in its secret articles were contained stipulations which amounted to an abandonment of the Empire, by its head, to the rapacity of the Republican government. Venice was the glittering prize which induced this dereliction of principle on the part of the Emperor; and, accordingly, it was agreed that, on the same day on which that great city was surrendered to the Imperial troops, Mayence, the bulwark of the German empire on the Lower Rhine, should be given up to the Republicans.* By an additional article it was provided, that the Austrian troops should, within twenty days after the ratification of the secret articles, evacuate also Ingolstadt, Philippsburgh, and all the fortresses as far back as the frontiers of the Hereditary States; and that, within the same period, the French forces should retire from Palma Nuova, Legnago, Ozoppo, and the Italian fortresses as far as the Adige.¹

This important military convention, which totally disabled the empire from making any effectual resistance to the French forces, was kept a profound secret, and only became known to the German princes when, from its provisions being carried into execution, it could no longer, in part at least, be concealed. But, in the mean time, it

* The Emperor, in the secret articles, agreed that the frontiers of France should be advanced to the Rhine, and stipulated that the Imperial troops should take possession of Venice on the same day on which the Republicans entered Mayence. He promised to use his influence to induce the Germanic states to agree to that arrangement; but if, notwithstanding his endeavours, they should refuse to accede to it, he engaged to employ no troops, excepting the contingent he was bound, as a member of the Confederation, to furnish, in any war which might ensue, and not even to suffer them to be engaged in the defence of any fortified place: any violation of this last article was to be considered as a sufficient ground for the resumption of hostilities against Austria. Indemnities were to be obtained, if possible, for the dispossessed princes on the left bank of the Rhine; but no acquisition was to be proposed for the benefit of Prussia.—See the *Secret Articles in Corresp. Conf. de Nap.* vii. 287, 292.

led to a very great degree of intimacy between Napoleon and Cobentzell, the Austrian ambassador at Rastadt, insomuch that the Emperor, who perceived the extreme irritation which at that moment the French general felt against the republican government at Paris, offered him a principality in Germany, with 250,000 souls, in order that "he might be for ever placed beyond the reach of democratic ingratitude." But the French general, whose ambition was fixed on very different objects, declined the offer. To such a length, however, did the confidence of the two diplomatists proceed, that Napoleon made Cobentzell acquainted with his secret intention at some future period of subverting the Directory. "An army," said he, "is assembled on the coasts of the Channel ostensibly for the invasion of England; but my real object is *to march at its head to Paris, and overturn that ridiculous government of lawyers*, which cannot much longer oppress France. Believe me, two years will not elapse before that preposterous scaffolding of a republic will fall to the ground. The Directory may maintain its ground during peace, but it cannot withstand the shock of war; and therefore it is, that it is indispensable that we should both occupy good positions." Cobentzell lost no time in making his cabinet acquainted with these extraordinary revelations, which were highly acceptable at Vienna, and furnish the true key to the great influence exercised by Napoleon over that government during the remainder of his residence in Europe prior to the Egyptian expedition.¹

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

¹ Hard. v.
66, 70, 71.

Great was the consternation in Germany when at length it could no longer be concealed that the line of the Rhine had been abandoned to France, and that all the states on the left bank of that river were to be sacrificed to the engrossing Republic. It was the more difficult for the Austrian plenipotentiaries at Rastadt to reconcile the dispossessed proprietors to this catastrophe, as the Emperor had officially announced to the Diet, shortly after the conclusion of the armistice of Leoben, "that an armis-

137.
Universal
terror which
this treaty
awakens in
Germany.

tice had been concluded by the Emperor for the Empire, on the base of the *integrity of the Germanic body*." Remonstrances and petitions in consequence rapidly succeeded each other, as suspicions of the fate impending over them got afloat, but without effect; and soon the decisive evidence of facts convinced the most incredulous, that a portion at least of the Empire had been abandoned. Intelligence successively arrived, that Mayence had been surrendered to the Republicans on the 30th December, in presence of, and without opposition from, the Austrian forces: that Venice, stripped of all its riches, had been abandoned to the Imperialists on the 15th January; and that the fort on the Rhine, opposite Mannheim, which refused to surrender to the summons of the French general, had been carried by assault on the 25th of the same month; while the Austrian forces, instead of offering any resistance, were evidently retiring towards the frontiers of the Hereditary States. A universal stupor seized on the German people when they beheld themselves thus abandoned by their natural guardians, and the only ones capable of rendering them any effectual protection; and their deputies expressed themselves in angry terms to the Imperial plenipotentiaries on the subject. But M. Lehrbach replied, when no longer able to conceal this dismemberment of the Empire,—“All the world is aware of the sacrifices which Austria has made during the war; and that the misfortunes which have occurred are nothing more than what she has uniformly predicted would occur, if a cordial union of all the Germanic states was not effected to maintain their independence. Singly, she has made the utmost efforts to maintain the integrity of the Empire; she has exhausted all her resources in the attempt: if she has been unsuccessful, let those answer for it who contributed nothing towards the common cause.” This defence was perfectly just: Austria had performed, and nobly performed, her part as head of the Empire; its dismemberment arose from the inaction of Prussia, which,

with an armed force of above two hundred thousand men, and a revenue of nearly £6,000,000 sterling, had done nothing whatever for the cause of Germany. It is not the cession of the left bank of the Rhine to France, it is the spoliation of Venice, which at this period forms an indelible stain on the Austrian annals.¹

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

¹ Hard. v.
78, 96; vi.
433, 434;
and vii. 6.

After the cession of the line of the Rhine to France was finally divulged, the attention of the plenipotentiaries was chiefly directed to the means of providing indemnities to the dispossessed princes, and the Republican envoys had already broached their favourite project of *secularisations*;—in other words, indemnifying the lay princes at the expense of the church,—when an event occurred at Vienna which threatened to produce an immediate explosion between the two governments. On occasion of the anniversary of the general arming of the Vienna volunteers on April 13, in the preceding year, the youth of that capital expressed a strong desire to give vent to the ardour of their patriotic feeling by a fête in honour of the glorious stand then made by their countrymen. It was hazardous to agree to such a proposal, as the French ambassador, General Bernadotte, had testified his repugnance to it, and declared his resolution, if it was persisted in, to give a dinner in honour of democratic principles at his hotel. But the Austrian government could not withstand the wishes of the defenders of the monarchy: the proposed fête took place, and the French ambassador, in consequence, gave a great entertainment to his friends, and hoisted an immense tricolor flag before his gate, with the words "*Liberté, Égalité*," inscribed upon it. The opposing principles being thus brought into contact with each other, a collision took place. The people of Vienna conceived the conduct of the French ambassador to be a direct insult offered to their beloved Emperor, and flocked in menacing crowds to the neighbourhood of his hotel. The Austrian authorities, seeing the popular exasperation hourly increasing, in vain besought Bernadotte to remove

138.

Tumult at
Vienna, and
insult to the
French am-
bassador.

April 13.

CHAP.
XXV.

1798.

the obnoxious standard. He deemed his own honour and that of the Republic pledged to its being kept up; and at length the multitude began to ascend ladders to break open the windows. A pistol discharged by a servant within, which wounded one of the assailants, only increased the excitement; the gates and windows were speedily forced, the apartments pillaged, and the carriages in the yard broken to pieces. Fifty thousand persons assembled in the streets, and the French ambassador, barricaded in one of the rooms of his hotel, was only delivered at one o'clock in the morning by two regiments of cuirassiers, which the Imperial government sent to his relief. Justly indignant at this disgraceful outrage, Bernadotte transmitted several angry notes to the Austrian cabinet; and although they published a proclamation on the following day, expressing the deepest regret at the disorders which had occurred, nothing would appease the exasperated ambassador, and on the 15th he left Vienna, under a numerous escort of cavalry, and took the road for Rastadt.¹

April 15.

¹ Hard. v.
135, 493,
508.

139.
Conferences
opened at
Seltz.

When matters were in this combustible state, a spark only was required to light the conflagration. Conferences were opened at Seltz, in Germany, where, on the one hand, the Directory insisted on satisfaction for the insult offered to the ambassador of the Republic; and, on the other, the Emperor demanded an explanation of the conduct of France in subduing, without the shadow of a pretext, the Helvetic Confederacy, and extending its dominion through the whole of Italy. As the Austrians could obtain no satisfaction on these points, the Emperor drew more close his bonds of intimacy with the court of St Petersburg; and the march of the Russian armies through Gallicia and Moravia was hastened, while the military preparations of the Austrian monarchy proceeded with redoubled activity.²

October.

² Th. x. 145,
146, 149.
Jom. xi. 8, 9.
Lac. x. 341.

The negotiations at Rastadt for the settlement of the affairs of the Germanic empire proceeded slowly towards an adjustment; but their importance disappeared upon

the commencement of the more weighty discussions involved in the Seltz conferences. The French insisted upon a variety of articles utterly inconsistent with the spirit of the treaty of Campo Formio or the independence of Germany. They first demanded all the islands of the Rhine, which were of very great importance in a military point of view; next, that they should be put in possession of Kehl and its territory opposite to Strassburg, and Cassel and its territory opposite to Mayence; then that a piece of ground, adequate to the formation of a *tête-de-pont*, should be ceded to them at the German end of the bridge of Huningen; and, lastly, that the important fortress of Ehrenbreitstein should be demolished. The German deputation, on the other hand, insisted that the principle of separation should be that of *thalweg*; that is to say, of the division of the valley by the middle of its principal stream. As a consequence of this principle, they refused to cede Kehl, Cassel, or the *tête-de-pont* at Huningen, or to demolish the fortifications of Ehrenbreitstein, all of which lay on the German bank of the river. Subsequently, the French commissioners admitted the principle of the *thalweg*, and consented to the demolition of Cassel and Kehl, and the Germans agreed to that of Ehrenbreitstein; but the Republicans insisted on the cession of the island of Petersaw, which would have given them the means of crossing opposite that important point. Matters were in this unsettled state, when the negotiations were interrupted by the march of the Russian troops through Moravia. The French government upon that issued a note, in which they declared that they would consider the crossing of the German frontier by that army as equivalent to a declaration of war; and as their advance continued without interruption, the negotiations at Rastadt virtually came to an end.¹

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XXV.

1798.

140.

Which issue
in a rupture
between
Austria and
France.

October.

¹ Jom. xi.
27, 28. Th.
x. 154, 157.
Hard. vi.
371, 388.

Seeing themselves seriously menaced with an armed resistance to their project for subjugating all the adjoining states by means of exciting revolutions in their bosom,

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XXV.

1798.

141.
Financial
measures of
the Direc-
tory to meet
the ap-
proaching
hostilities.¹ Jom. xi.
25, 26.142.
Adoption of
the law of
the Con-
scription by
the legis-
lature.

Sept. 28.

the Directory at length began to adopt measures to make head against the danger. The finances of the Republic were in a most alarming state. Notwithstanding the confiscation of two-thirds of the national debt, it was discovered that there would be a deficit of 200,000,000 francs, or £8,000,000 sterling, in the returns of the year. New taxes, chiefly on doors and windows, were imposed, and a decree passed, authorising national domains, to the value of 125,000,000 of francs, or £5,000,000 sterling, to be taken from the public creditors, to whom they had been surrendered in liquidation of their claims, and the property of the whole Protestant clergy to be confiscated to the service of the state: thus putting, to support their revolutionary conquests, the last hand to the revolutionary confiscations.¹

It remained to adopt some method for the augmentation of the army, which had been very much diminished by sickness and desertion since the peace of Campo Formio. The skeletons of the regiments and the non-commissioned officers remained; but the ranks exhibited large chasms, which the existing state of the law provided no means of supplying. The Convention, notwithstanding their energy, had made no permanent provision for recruiting the army, but had contented themselves with two levies, one of 300,000, and one of 1,200,000 men, in 1793, which, with the voluntary supplies since furnished by the patriotism or suffering of the people, had been found adequate to the wants of the state. But now that the revolutionary fervour had subsided, and a necessity existed for finding a permanent supply of soldiers to meet the wars into which the insatiable ambition of the government had plunged the country, some lasting resource became indispensable. To meet the difficulty, General Jourdan proposed the law of the CONSCRIPTION, which became one of the most important consequences of the Revolution. By this decree, every Frenchman from twenty to forty-five years of age was declared amenable to military service. Those liable to serve were divided

into classes, according to the years of their birth, and the government were authorised to call out the youngest, second, or third class, according to the exigencies of the times. The conscription was to take place by lot, in the class from which it was directed to be taken. This law was immediately adopted; and the first levy of two hundred thousand men from France was ordered to be immediately enforced, while eighteen thousand men were required from the affiliated republic of Switzerland, and the like number from that of Holland.¹

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XXV.

1798.

¹ Jom. xi.
23, 24. Th.
x. 183, 184.

Thus the justice of Heaven made the revolutionary passions of France the means of working out their own punishment. The atrocious aggression on Switzerland, the flames of Unterwalden, the subjugation of Italy, were registered in the book of fate, and brought about a dreadful and lasting retribution. Not the bayonets of the Allies, not the defence of their country, occasioned this lasting scourge; the invasion of other states, the cries of injured innocence, first brought it into existence. They fixed upon its infatuated people that terrible law, which soon carried misery into every cottage, and bathed in tears every mother in France. Wide as had been the spread of the national sin, as wide was the lash of national punishment. By furnishing an almost inexhaustible supply of military levies, it fanned the spirit of universal conquest, and precipitated its people into the bloody career of Napoleon. It produced that terrible contest which, after exhausting the resources, brought about the subjugation of that great kingdom, and wrung from its infuriated but not repentant inhabitants what one of themselves has styled tears of blood.² It is thus that Providence vindicates its superintendence of the moral world; that the guilty career of nations, equally as that of individuals, brings down upon itself a righteous punishment; and that we feel, amidst all the sins of rulers, or madness of the people, the truth of the sublime words of Scripture: "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone."

143.
Reflections
on this
event.

² Sav. iv.
382.

CHAPTER XXVI.

EXPEDITION TO EGYPT.

CHAP.
XXVI.

1797.

1.

Great political and commercial importance of Egypt, and its advantages of situation.

“By seizing the Isthmus of Darien,” said Sir Walter Raleigh, “you will wrest the keys of the world from Spain.” The observation, worthy of his reach of thought, is still more applicable to the Isthmus of Suez and the country of Egypt. It is remarkable that its importance has never been duly appreciated, except by the greatest conquerors of ancient and modern times, Alexander the Great and Napoleon Buonaparte. The geographical position of this celebrated country has destined it to be the chief emporium of the commerce of the world. Placed in the centre between Europe and Asia, on the confines of Eastern wealth and Western civilisation; at the extremity of the African continent, and on the shores of the Mediterranean sea, it is fitted to become the central point of communication for the varied productions of these different regions of the globe. The waters of the Mediterranean bring to it all the fabrics of Europe; the Red Sea wafts to its shores the riches of India and China; while the Nile floats down to its bosom the produce of the vast and unknown regions of Africa. Though it were not one of the most fertile countries in the world—though the inundations of the Nile did not annually cover its fields with riches, it would still be, from its situation, one of the most favoured spots on the earth. The greatest and most durable monuments of human industry, accor-

dingly, the earliest efforts of civilisation, the sublimest works of genius, have been raised in this primeval seat of mankind. The temples of Rome have decayed ; the arts of Athens have perished ; but the pyramids " still stand erect and unshaken above the floods of the Nile."¹ When, in the revolution of ages, civilisation shall have returned to its ancient cradle,—when the desolation of Mahometan rule shall have ceased, and the light of religion have re-illuminated the land of its birth—Egypt will again become one of the great centres of human industry. The invention of steam has already restored the communication with the East to its original channel ; and the nation which shall revive the canal of Suez, and open a direct communication between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, will pour into its bosom those streams of wealth which in every age have constituted the principal sources of European opulence.

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XXVI.

1797.

¹ Gibbon.

The great Leibnitz, in the time of Louis XIV., addressed to the French monarch a memorial, which is one of the noblest monuments of political foresight. "Sire," said he, "it is not at home that you will succeed in subduing the Dutch ; you will not cross their dykes, and you will rouse Europe to their assistance. It is in Egypt that the real blow is to be struck. There you will find the true commercial route to India ; you will wrest that lucrative commerce from Holland ; you will secure the eternal dominion of France in the Levant ; you will fill Christendom with joy."* These ideas, however, were beyond the age, and they lay dormant till revived by the genius of Napoleon. The eagle eye of Alexander the Great, which fitted him to have been as great a benefactor as he was a scourge of the species, early discerned the vast capabilities

2.
Its importance early perceived by Leibnitz. Alexander the Great and Napoleon equally appreciated its value.

* "The possession of Egypt," says he, in the same memorial, "will open a prompt communication with the richest countries of the East. It will unite the commerce of the Indies to that of France, and pave the way for great captains to march to conquests worthy of Alexander. If the Portuguese, whose power is much inferior to that of France, had been able to obtain possession of Egypt, the whole of India would have been long since subjected to them ; and yet, notwithstanding the smallness of their numbers, they have made them-

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XXVI.

1797.

of this country ; and to him was owing the foundation of that city, the rival of Memphis and Thebes, which once boasted of six hundred thousand inhabitants, almost rivalled Rome in the plenitude of its power, and still bears, amidst ruins and decay, the name of the conqueror of the East. Napoleon was hardly launched into the career of conquest before he also perceived the importance of this country ; and when still struggling in the plains of Italy with the armies of Austria, he was meditating an expedition into those Eastern regions, where alone, in his apprehension, great things could be achieved ; where kingdoms lay open to private adventure ; and fame, rivalling that of the heroes of antiquity, was to be obtained. From his earliest years he had been influenced by an ardent desire to effect a revolution in the East : he was literally haunted by the idea of glory which had been there acquired, and firmly convinced that the power of England could never be effectually humbled except by a blow at its Indian possessions. "The Persians," said he, "have blocked up the route of Tamerlane ; I will discover another." It was his favourite opinion through life, that Egypt was the true line of communication with India ; that it was there that the English power could alone be seriously affected ; that its possession would insure the dominion of the Mediterranean, and convert that sea into a "French lake." From that central point armaments might be detached down the Red Sea, to attack the British possessions in India ; and an entrepot established, which would soon turn the commerce of the East into the channels which nature had formed for its reception—the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.¹

¹ Th. ix. 62,
69. D'Abr.
iv. 263.
Bour. ii.
411.

It was at Passeriano, however, after the campaign was selves formidable to the people of those countries. Egypt once conquered, nothing could be easier than to take possession of the entire coast of the Red Sea, and of the innumerable islands which border it. The interior of Asia, destitute of both commerce and wealth, would range itself at once beneath your dominion. The success of this enterprise would for ever secure the possession of the Indies, the commerce of Asia, and the dominion of the world."—*Memorial*, 1672, LEIBNITZ to LOUIS XIV.

concluded, and when his energetic mind turned abroad to seek the theatre of fresh exploits, that the conception of an expedition to Egypt first seriously occupied his thoughts. During his long evening walks in the magnificent park of his mansion, he spoke without intermission of the celebrity of those countries, and the illustrious empires which have there disappeared, after overturning each other, but the memory of which still lives in the recollections of mankind. "Europe," said he, "is no field for glorious exploits; no great empires or revolutions are to be found but in the East, where there are six hundred millions of men." Egypt at once presented itself to his imagination as the point where a decisive impression was to be made; the weak point of the line where a breach could be effected, a permanent lodgment secured, a path opened to those Eastern regions where the British power was to be destroyed, and immortal renown acquired. So completely had this idea taken possession of his mind, that all of the books brought from the Ambrosian library to Paris, after the peace of Campo Formio, which related to Egypt, were submitted to his examination, and many bore extensive marginal notes in his own handwriting, indicating the powerful grasp and indefatigable activity of his mind. And in his correspondence with the Directory he had already, more than once, suggested both the importance of an expedition to the banks of the Nile, and the amount of force requisite to insure its success.¹

Before leaving Italy, after the treaty of Campo Formio, he put the last hand to the affairs of the Cisalpine republic. Venice was delivered over, amidst the tears of all its patriotic citizens, to Austria; the French auxiliary force in the new republic was fixed at thirty thousand men, under the orders of Berthier, to be maintained at the expense of the allied state; and all the republican organisation of a directory, legislative assemblies, national guards, and troops of the line, was put in full activity. "You are the first people in history," said he, in his parting

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1797.

3.

Napoleon's
ideas are
matured at
Passeriano.

¹ James's
Naval His-
tory, ii. 216.
Bour. ii. 44.
Corresp.
Conf. de
Nap. iv. 176.

4.
His parting
address to
the Italians.

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¹ Nap. iv.
271.

address to them, "who have become free without factions, without revolutions, without convulsions. We have given you freedom; it is your part to preserve it. You are, after France, the richest, the most populous republic in the world. Your position calls you to take a leading part in the politics of Europe. To be worthy of your destiny, make no laws but what are wise and moderate; but execute them with force and energy."¹ The wealth and population of the beautiful provinces which composed this republic, embracing 3,500,000 souls, the fortress of Mantua, and the plains of Lombardy, formed indeed the elements of a powerful state; but had Napoleon looked into the book of history, or considered the human mind, he would have perceived that, of all human blessings, liberty is the one which is of the slowest growth; that it must be won, and cannot be conferred; and that the institutions which are suddenly transferred from one country to another, perish as rapidly as the full-grown tree, which is transplanted from the soil of its birth to a distant land.

5.
His triumphal journey across Switzerland to Rastadt and Paris. Political objects of this journey. Its ominous character for Switzerland.

Napoleon's journey from Italy to Paris was a continual triumph. The Italians, whose national spirit had been in some degree revived by his victories, beheld with regret the disappearance of that brilliant apparition. Everything he did and said was calculated to increase the public enthusiasm. At Mantua, he combined with a fête in honour of Virgil a military procession on the death of General Hoche, who had recently died, after a short illness, in France; and about the same time formed that friendship with Desaix, who had come from the army of the Rhine to visit that of Italy, which mutual esteem was so well calculated to inspire, but which was destined to terminate prematurely on the field of Marengo. The towns of Switzerland received him with transport; triumphal arches and garlands of flowers everywhere awaited his approach; he passed the fortresses amidst discharges of cannon; and crowds from the neighbouring countries lined

the roads to get a glimpse of the hero who had filled the world with his renown.* His progress, in general, was rapid: but he dwelt on the scenes of ancient renown or present interest. At Berne, he asked an ominous question as to the *amount of its treasure*, which the senator to whom it was addressed had the prudence to state at half its real amount. He lingered long on the field of Morat, to examine the scene of the terrible defeat of the Burgundian chivalry by the Swiss peasantry. Passing Bâle, he arrived at Rastadt, where the congress was established; but, foreseeing nothing worthy of his genius in the minute matters of diplomacy which were there the subject of discussion, he proceeded to Paris, where the public anxiety for his return had arisen to the highest pitch.¹

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Dec. 5.

¹ Bour. ii.
5, 9. Th.
ix. 363.
Nap. ii. 268.
Hard. v. 57,
58.

The successive arrival of Napoleon's lieutenants at Paris with the standards taken from the enemy in his memorable campaigns, the vast conquests he had achieved, the brief but eloquent language of his proclamations, and the immense benefits which had accrued to the Republic from his triumphs, had raised to the very highest pitch the enthusiasm of the people. The public anxiety, accordingly, to see him, was indescribable; but he knew enough of mankind to feel the importance of enhancing the general wish by avoiding its gratification. He lived in his own house in the Rue Chantereine, in the most retired manner, went seldom into public, and surrounded himself only by scientific characters, or generals of cultivated minds. He avoided military society, seemed devoted to civil and scientific pursuits, wore the costume of the Institute, of which he had recently been elected a member; associated constantly with its leading characters, such as Monge, Berthold, Laplace, Lagrange; and admitted to his intimate society only Berthier, Desaix, Lefebvre,

6.
His retired
manner of
life at Paris.

* His words, though few, were all such as were calculated to produce revolution. At Geneva, he boasted that he would *democratise* England in three months; and that there were, in truth, but two republics in Switzerland — Geneva, without laws or government; Bâle, converted into the workshop of revolution.—HARD. v. 308.

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Caffarelli, Kleber, and a few of the deputies. On occasion of being presented to Talleyrand, minister of foreign affairs, he singled out, amidst the splendid *cortège* of public characters by which he was surrounded, M. Bougainville, and conversed with him on the celebrated voyage which he had performed. Such was the profound nature of his ambition through life, that on every occasion he looked rather to the impression his conduct was to produce on men's minds in future, than the gratification he was to receive from their admiration of the past. He literally "deemed nothing done, while anything remained to do."* Even in the assumption of the dress, and the choice of the society of the Institute, he was guided by motives of ambition, and a profound knowledge of the human heart. "Mankind," said he, "are in the end governed always by superiority of intellectual qualities, and none are more sensible of this than the military profession. When, on my return from Italy, I assumed the dress of the Institute, I knew what I was doing: I was sure of not being misunderstood by the lowest drummer of the army."¹

¹ Thibaudau, *Consulat*, 78. *Th.* ix. 363, 364. *Nap.* iv. 280, 283.

7.
His reception in state by the Directory. Talleyrand's speech.

Shortly after his arrival he was received in state by the Directory, in their now magnificent palace of the Luxembourg. The public anxiety was wound up to the highest pitch for this imposing ceremony, on which occasion Joubert was to present the standard of the army of Italy, inscribed with all the great actions it had performed; and the youthful conqueror himself was to lay at the feet of government the treaty of Campo Formio. Vast galleries were prepared for the accommodation of the public, which were early filled with all that was distinguished in rank, character, and beauty in Paris. He made his entry, accompanied by M. Talleyrand, who was to present him to the Directory as the bearer of the treaty. The aspect of the hero—his thin but graceful figure, the Roman cast of his features, and fire of his eye—excited universal

* "Nil actum putans, dum quid superesset agendum."—LUCAN, *Pharsalia*.

admiration ; the court rang with applause. Talleyrand introduced him in an eloquent speech, in which, after extolling his great actions, he concluded,—“ For a moment I did feel on his account that inquietude which, in an infant republic, arises from everything which seems to destroy the equality of the citizens. But I was wrong : individual grandeur, far from being dangerous to equality, is its highest triumph ; and on this occasion, every Frenchman must feel himself elevated by the hero of his country. And when I reflect on all that he has done to shroud from envy that light of glory ; on that ancient love of simplicity which distinguishes him in his favourite studies ; on his love for the abstract sciences ; on his admiration for that sublime Ossian which seems to detach him from the world ; on his well-known contempt for luxury, for pomp, for all that constitutes the pride of ignoble minds, I am convinced that, far from dreading his ambition, we shall one day have occasion to rouse it anew to allure him from the sweets of studious retirement. France will never lose its freedom ; but perhaps he will not for ever preserve his own.”¹

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¹ Bour. ii.
24.

Napoleon replied in these words,—“ The French people, to attain their freedom, had kings to combat ; to secure a constitution founded on reason, they had eighteen hundred years of prejudices to overcome. Religion, feudality, despotism, have, in their turns, governed Europe ; but from the peace now concluded dates the era of representative governments. You have succeeded in organising the great nation, whose territory is only circumscribed because nature herself has imposed its limits. I lay at your feet the treaty of Campo Formio, ratified by the Emperor.* As soon as the happiness of France is secured by the best *organic laws*, the whole of Europe will be

8.
Napoleon's
answer.

* Napoleon had added these words in this place,—“ That peace secures the liberty, the prosperity, and glory, of the Republic ;” but these words were struck out by order of the Directory—a sufficient proof of their disapproval of his conduct in signing it, and one of the many inducements which led him to turn his face to the East.—See HARD. v. 74.

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¹ Th. ix. 368.
Nap. iv. 283,
284.

9.
Successive
fêtes given
by other
public
bodies.

free." The Directory, by the voice of Barras, returned an inflated reply, in which they invited him to strive for the acquisition of fresh laurels, and pointed to the shores of Great Britain as the place where they were to be gathered. On this occasion, General Joubert, and the chief of the staff, Andréossi, bore the magnificent standard which the Directory had given to the army of Italy, and which contained an enumeration of triumphs so wonderful that it would have passed for fabulous in any other age.* It was sufficient to intoxicate all the youth of France with the passion for military glory.¹

This fête was followed by others, given by the legislative body and the minister of foreign affairs. Napoleon appeared at all these; but they were foreign to his disposition, and he retired, as soon as politeness would permit, to his own house. At that given by M. Talleyrand, which was distinguished by the good taste and elegance which prevailed, he was asked by Madame de Stael, in presence of a numerous circle, who was, in his opinion, the greatest woman that ever existed. "She," he replied, "who has had the greatest number of children"—an answer very different from what she anticipated, and singularly characteristic of his opinions on the proper destiny of the female character. At the Institute, he was to be seen always seated between Lagrange and Laplace, apparently

* It bore these words:—"The army of Italy has made 150,000 prisoners; it has taken 170 standards, 500 pieces of heavy artillery, 600 field-pieces, 5 pontoon trains, 9 ships of the line, 12 frigates, 12 corvettes, 18 galleys. Armistice with the Kings of Sardinia, Naples, the Dukes of Parma and Modena, and the Pope. Preliminaries of Leoben; Convention of Montebello with Genoa. Treaty of Tolentino. Treaty of Campo Formio. It has given freedom to the people of Bologna, Ferrara, Modena, Massa-Carrara, Romagna, Lombardy, Brescia, Bergamo, Mantua, Cremona, a part of the Veronese, Chiavenna, Bormio, and the Valteline; to the people of Genoa, the Imperial fiefs, Corcyra, and Ithaca. Sent to Paris the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Michael Angelo, Guercino, Titian, Paul Veronese, Coreggio, Albano, the Caraccis, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, &c. Triumphed in 18 pitched battles—Montenotte, Millesimo, Mondovi, Lodi, Borghetta, Lonato, Castiglione, Roveredo, Bassano, St George's, Fontana Viva, Caldiero, Arcola, Rivoli, la Favorite, the Tagliamento, Tarwis, Neumarkt;" and then followed the names of 67 combats or lesser engagements.² The legions of Cæsar had not, in so short a time, so splendid a roll of achievements to exhibit.

Th. ix. 369.

wholly occupied with the abstract sciences. To a deputation of that learned body, he returned an answer:—"I am highly honoured with the approbation of the distinguished men who compose the Institute. I know well that I must long be their scholar before I become their equal. The true conquests, the only ones which do not cause a tear, are those which are gained over ignorance. The most honourable, as well as the most useful occupation of men is, to contribute to the extension of ideas. The power of the French Republic should henceforth consist in this, that not a single new idea should exist which does not owe its birth to its exertions." But it was only for the approbation of these illustrious men that he appeared solicitous; he was never seen in the streets; went only to a concealed box in the opera; and when he assumed the reins of power after his return from Egypt, his personal appearance was still unknown to the greater part of the inhabitants of Paris.¹

¹ Nap. iv.
285, 286.
Savary, i.
22. Bour.
ii. 33.

10.
Napoleon's
private
views in
regard to
his future
life.

But Napoleon's was not a disposition to remain satisfied with past glory; the future—yet higher achievements—filled his mind. He knew well the ephemeral nature of popular applause, and how necessary mystery or a succession of great actions is, to prolong its transports. "They do not long preserve at Paris," said he to his intimate friends, "the remembrance of anything. If I remain long unemployed, I am undone. The renown of one in this great Babylon speedily supplants that of another. If I am seen three times at the opera, I shall no longer be an object of curiosity. You need not talk of the desire of the citizens to get a sight of me: crowds at least as great would go to see me led out to the scaffold." He made an effort to obtain a dispensation with the law which required the age of forty for one of the Directory; but, failing in that attempt, his whole thoughts and passions centred in the East, the theatre of his original visions of glory. "Bourrienne," said he, "I am determined not to remain in Paris; there is nothing to be done here. It is

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impossible to fix the attention of the people. If I remain longer inactive, I am undone. Everything here passes away; my glory is already declining; this little corner of Europe is too small to supply it. We must go to the East; all the great men of the world have there acquired their celebrity. Nevertheless, I am willing to make a tour to the coasts with yourself, Lannes, and Solkowsky. Should the expedition to Britain prove, as I much fear it will, too hazardous, the Army of England will become the army of the East, and we will go to Egypt." These words give a just idea of the character of Napoleon. Glory was his ruling passion; nothing appeared impossible where it was to be won. The great names of Alexander, Cæsar, and Hannibal haunted his imagination; passing over the lapse of two thousand years, he fixed his rivalry on those classical heroes, whose exploits have shed so imperishable a lustre over the annals of antiquity. While thus sustaining his reputation, and inscribing his name on the eternal monuments of Egyptian grandeur, he hoped to be still within reach of the march of events in Europe, and ready to assume that despotic command which, he already foresaw, would soon be called for by the incapacity of the Directory, and the never-ending distractions of democratic institutions.¹

¹ Bour. ii.
32, 35. Lac.
xiv. 139.

11.
Secret views
of the Di-
rectory.
Their desire
to get quit
of Napo-
leon. Pre-
parations for
a descent on
England.

In truth, the Directory, secretly alarmed at the reputation of the conqueror of Italy, eagerly sought, under the splendid colouring of a descent on England, an opportunity of ridding themselves of so formidable a rival. An extraordinary degree of activity prevailed in all the harbours, not only of France and Holland, but of Spain and Italy: the fleets at Cadiz and Toulon were soon in a condition to put to sea; that at Brest only awaited, to all appearance, their arrival, to issue forth, and form a preponderating force in the Channel, where the utmost exertions were making to construct and equip flat-bottomed boats for the conveyance of the land troops. Means were soon collected in the northern harbours for

the transport of sixty thousand men. Meanwhile great part of the armies of the Rhine were brought down to the maritime districts, and lined the shores of France and Holland, from Brest to the Texel; nearly one hundred and fifty thousand men were stationed on these coasts, under the name of the Army of England.* This immense force might have occasioned great disquietude to the British government, had it been supported by a powerful navy; but the battles of St Vincent and Camperdown had relieved them of all apprehensions of a descent by these numerous enemies. It does not appear that the Directory then entertained any serious thoughts of carrying the invasion into early execution: although the troops were encamped in the maritime departments, no immediate preparation for embarkation had been made. However, their language breathed nothing but menaces: Napoleon was appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of England, and he was despatched on a mission to the coasts to superintend the completion of the armament.¹

¹ Bour. ii.
39. Lac.
xiv. 138,
139. Nap.
ii. 165.

“Crown,” said Barras, “so illustrious a life, by a conquest which the great nation owes to its outraged dignity. Go, and by the punishment of the cabinet of London, strike terror into the hearts of all who would miscalculate the powers of a free people. Let the conquerors of the Po, the Rhine, and the Tiber, march under your banners; the ocean will be proud to bear them; it is a slave still indignant, who blushes for his fetters. He invokes, in a voice of thunder, the wrath of the earth against the oppressor of the waves. Pompey did not esteem it beneath him to wield the power of Rome against the pirates: Go and chain the monster who presses on the seas; go and punish in London the injured rights of humanity. Hardly shall the tricolor

12.
Pompous
speech of
Barras on
giving him
the com-
mand of the
army of
England.
Real views
of both
parties.

* It was stated at 275,000 men, all fully equipped, by the French Directory, in their communications to the Irish insurgents.—See *Secret Information as to hostile Preparations in the French ports, February and March 1798*; *Castlereagh Papers*, i. 165, 166.

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¹ Nap. ii.
164. Lac.
xiv. 138,
139, 140.
Nap. iv. 287.
Bour. ii. 37.

^{13.}
Napoleon's
growing
horror of
the revolu-
tionary
system.

² Wolfe
Tone, Me-
moirs, ii.
276. Nap.
iv. 301.

standard wave on the blood-stained shores of the Thames, ere a unanimous cry will bless your arrival, and that generous nation, perceiving the dawn of its felicity, will receive you as liberators, who come not to combat and enslave, but to put a period to its calamities." Under these high-sounding declamations, however, all parties concealed very different intentions. Immense preparations were made in Italy and the south of France, as well as on the shores of the Channel; the whole naval resources of the Mediterranean were put in requisition, and the *élite* of the army of Italy moved to Toulon, Genoa, and Civita Vecchia. The Directory were more desirous to see Napoleon engulfed in the sands of Lybia than conquering on the banks of the Thames; and he dreamed more of the career of Alexander and of Mahomet, than of the descent of Cæsar on the shores of Britain.¹

Independent of his anxiety to engage in some enterprise which might immortalise his name, Napoleon was desirous to detach himself from the government, from his strong and growing aversion to the Jacobin party, whom the revolution of the 18th Fructidor had placed at the head of the Republic. Already he had, on more than one occasion, openly expressed his dislike at the violent revolutionary course which the Directory were pursuing, both at home and abroad; and in private he gave vent, in the strongest terms, to his horror at that grasping insatiable democratic spirit, which, through his subsequent life, he set himself so vigorously to resist. "What," said he, "would these Jacobins have? France is revolutionised, Holland is revolutionised, Italy is revolutionised, Switzerland is revolutionised, Europe will soon be revolutionised. But this, it seems, will not suffice them. I know full well what they want: they want the domination of thirty or forty individuals founded on the massacre of three or four millions; they want the constitution of 1793, but they shall not have it, and death to him who would demand it!"² For my own part I declare,

that if I had only the option between royalty and the system of these gentlemen, I would not hesitate one moment to declare for a king."

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In the middle of February, Napoleon proceeded to the coasts, accompanied by Lannes and Bourrienne. He visited, in less than ten days, Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk, Antwerp, and Flushing, exhibiting everywhere his usual sagacity and rapidity of apprehension; conversing with, deriving light from every one possessed of local information, and obtaining in a few weeks what it would have taken others years to acquire. He sat up till midnight at every town, interrogating the sailors, fishermen, and smugglers: to their objections he listened with patient attention, to his own difficulties he drew their consideration. During this brief journey, he acquired an intimate acquaintance with the relative importance of these maritime stations; and to this period is to be assigned the origin of those great conceptions concerning Antwerp, which, under the empire, he carried with so much vigour into execution. At length, having acquired all the information which could be obtained, he made up his mind and returned to Paris. "It is too doubtful a chance," said he; "I will not risk it; I will not hazard, on such a throw, the fate of France." Thenceforward all his energies were turned towards the Egyptian expedition.¹

14.
His journey
to the coasts
of the Chan-
nel.

10th Feb.

¹ Nap. iv.
287. Bour.
ii. 38. Th.
x. 15.

It was not the difficulty of transporting sixty or eighty thousand men to the shores of Britain which deterred Napoleon; the impossibility of maintaining a strict blockade of an extensive line of coast, on a tempestuous sea, and the chance of getting over unseen in hazy weather, sufficiently demonstrated that such an attempt, however hazardous, was practicable under favourable circumstances. It was the obstacles in the way of maintaining them in the country after they were landed, and supporting them by the necessary stores and reinforcements, in presence of a superior naval force, which was the decisive consideration. Supposing the troops landed, a battle gained,

15.
Reasons
which de-
termined
him against
the English
expedition.

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and London taken, it was not to be expected that England would submit; and how to maintain the conquests made, and penetrate into the interior of the country, without continual reinforcements, and an uninterrupted communication with the Continent, was the insurmountable difficulty. There appeared no rational prospect at this period of accumulating a superior naval power in the Channel, or effecting an open connexion between the invading force and the shores of France; and this being the case, the Republican army, however successful at first, must, to all appearance, have sunk at last under the continued efforts of a brave, numerous, and united people. Thence may be seen the importance of the naval battles of St Vincent and Camperdown in the preceding year; the fate of the world hung upon their issue.¹

¹ James, ii.
215. Th. x.
13, 14.

16.
Defensive
preparations
of the British
government.

Meanwhile the British government, aware of the great preparations which were going on at once in so many different quarters, and ignorant where the blow was to fall, made every arrangement which prudence could suggest to ward off the impending danger. They had little apprehension as to the issue of a contest on the shores of Britain; but Ireland was the vulnerable quarter which filled them with disquietude. The unceasing discontents of that country had formed a large party, who were in open and ill-disguised communication with the French Directory, and the narrow escape which it had made by the dispersion of Hoche's squadron in Bantry Bay proved that the utmost vigilance, and a decided naval superiority, could not always be relied on to secure its extensive sea-coast from hostile invasion. In these circumstances, the principal efforts of the Admiralty were directed to strengthen the fleet off Brest and the Spanish coasts, from whence the menaced invasion might chiefly be expected to issue; while, at the same time, a small squadron was detached under Nelson, by Admiral St Vincent, from his squadron off Cadiz, which now amounted to eighteen ships of the line, to the Mediterranean, which was after-

wards raised, by the junction of eight ships of the line under Admiral Curtis, to thirteen line-of-battle ships, and one of fifty guns. The most active preparations for defence were at the same time made on the whole coasts; the vigilance of the cruisers in the Channel was redoubled; and the spirit of the nation, rising with the dangers which threatened it, prepared without dismay to meet the conqueror of Europe on the British shores.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
132, 139,
140. James's
Naval Hist.
ii. 215. Th.
ix. 73.

While all eyes in Europe, however, were turned to the Channel, and the world awaited, in anxious suspense, the terrible conflict which seemed to be approaching between the two powers whose hostility had so long divided mankind, the tempest had turned away in another direction. After considerable difficulty, Napoleon succeeded in persuading the Directory to undertake the expedition to Egypt. In vain they objected that it was to expose forty thousand of the best troops of the Republic to destruction; that the chance was small of escaping the English squadrons; and that Austria would not fail to take advantage of the absence of their best general to regain her lost provinces. The ardent mind of Napoleon obviated every objection; and at length the government, dazzled by the splendour of the design, and secretly rejoiced at the prospect of ridding themselves of so formidable a rival, even at the hazard of losing the noble force put at his disposal, agreed to his scheme, and gave him unlimited powers for carrying it into execution. Napoleon instantly applied himself, with extraordinary activity, to forward the expedition. He himself superintended everything; instructions succeeded each other with inconceivable rapidity; night and day he laboured with his secretary, despatching orders in every direction. The Directory collected for the expedition forty thousand of the best troops of the army of Italy; the fleet of Bruéys, consisting of thirteen ships of the line and fourteen frigates, was destined to convey the greater part of the army; while above 3,000,000 of francs

17.
Napoleon
persuades
the Direc-
tory to un-
dertake the
Egyptian
expedition.
His prodigi-
ous activity
in prepar-
ing it.

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¹ Mad. de
Stael, ii. 209.
Bour. ii. 40,
41, 42. Th.
ix. 52, 53,
67, 68.

18.
Objects of
Napoleon in
this expe-
dition.

of the treasure recently before taken at Berne, were granted by the Directory to meet the expenses of the expedition. It is painful to think that this celebrated undertaking should have been preceded by so flagrant an act of spoliation; and that the desire to provide for the charges of the enterprise out of the savings of the Swiss Confederacy during more than two hundred years, should have been one motive for the attack on the independence of that unoffending republic.¹*

Napoleon has thus stated the objects which he had in view in the Egyptian expedition. "1. To establish, on the banks of the Nile, a French colony, which could exist without slaves, and supply the place of St Domingo. 2. To open a vent for our manufactures in Africa, Arabia, and Syria, and obtain for our commerce the productions of these countries. 3. To set out from Egypt, as a vast *place d'armes*; to push forward an army of 60,000 men to the Indus, rouse the Mahrattas to a revolt, and excite against the English the population of these vast countries. Sixty thousand men, half Europeans, half natives, transported on 50,000 camels, and 10,000 horses, carrying with them provisions for fifty days, and water for six, with 150 pieces of cannon, and double ammunition, would arrive in four months in India. The ocean ceased to be an obstacle when vessels were constructed; the desert becomes passable the moment you have camels and dromedaries in abundance."²

² Nap. in
Month. ii.
208.

³ Jom. x. 291.
Lac. xiv. 195.

* The partisans of Napoleon are indignant at the imputation of his having recommended or concurred in the invasion of Switzerland, in order to procure, in the treasure of Berne, funds for the equipment of his Egyptian expedition; but it is certain that, in his journey through Switzerland, he asked an ominous question as to the amount of that ancient store;³ and, in his Secret Correspondence, there exists decisive evidence that he participated in the shameful act of robbery which soon afterwards followed, and equipped his fleet out of the funds thus obtained. On the 11th April 1798, he wrote to Lannes: "I have received, citizen-general, the letter of your aide-de-camp. Three millions have been despatched, by post, on the 7th of this month, from Berne for Lyons. You will find hereunto subjoined, the order from the Treasury to its agent at Lyons to forward it forthwith to Toulon. You will for this purpose cause it to be embarked on the Rhone; you will accompany it to Avignon; and from thence convey it by post to Toulon. Do not fail to inform me of what different pieces the three millions consist." On the 17th April he again writes to Lannes:

From his headquarters at Paris, Napoleon directed the vast preparations for this armament, which were going forward with the utmost activity in all the ports of Italy and the south of France. Four stations were assigned for the assembly of the convoys and the embarkation of the troops—Toulon, Genoa, Ajaccio, and Civita Vecchia; at the latter harbour, transports were moored alongside of the massy piers of Roman architecture to the bronze rings, still undecayed, which had been fixed in their blocks by the Emperor Trajan. A numerous artillery, and three thousand cavalry, were collected at these different stations, destined to be mounted on the incomparable horses of Egypt. The most celebrated generals of the Republic, Desaix and Kleber, as yet strangers to the fortunes of Napoleon, as well as those who had so ably seconded his efforts in Italy—Lannes, Murat, Junot, Reynier, Barraguay d'Hilliers, Vaubois, Bon, Belliard, and Dommartin—were ranged under his command. Caffarelli commanded the engineers; Berthier, who could hardly tear himself from the fascinations of beauty at Paris, the staff; the most illustrious philosophers and artists of the age, Monge, Berthollet, Fourier, Larrey, Desgenettes, Geoffroy St-Hilaire, and Denon, attended the expedition. Genius, in every department, hastened to range itself under the banners of the youthful hero.¹

The disturbance at Vienna, on account of the fête given

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19.

Magnificent
preparations
for the
expedition.

¹ Savary, i.
26. Th. ix.
69, 71.
Bour. ii. 46.

"From the information I have received from Berne, the three millions should arrive, at the very latest, on the 19th at Lyons. Forward them instantly on their arrival; do not go to bed till this is done; get ready in the mean time the boats for their reception; despatch a courier to me the instant they are fairly on board." And on the same day he wrote to the authorities charged at Toulon with the preparation of the expedition: "The Treasury has given orders that three millions should be forthwith forwarded to Toulon. The sailors of Bruçys' squadron must be paid the instant the *three millions arrive from Berne*." And, on the 20th April, he wrote to the Commissioners of the Treasury at Paris: "You have only given orders, citizen commissioners, for the transmission of such part of the three millions at Lyons, as is in francs and piastres, to Toulon. It is *indispensable, however, that we have it all*; you will be good enough, therefore, to send orders to your agent at Lyons for the transmission of the *whole*, of whatever descriptions of coin it is composed."—See *Corresp. Confid. de Napoléon*, v. 74, 85, 86, 87, 102.

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20.

Napoleon is
riven to it
by necessity.

by Bernadotte, the ambassador of the Republic at the Imperial court, which has been already mentioned, retarded for fifteen days the departure of the expedition. During that period, Europe awaited with breathless anxiety the course of the storm, which it was well known was now about to burst. Bourrienne, on this occasion, asked Napoleon if he was finally determined to risk his fate on the expedition to Egypt.—“Yes,” he replied; “I have tried everything, but they will have nothing to do with me. If I stayed here, it would be necessary to overturn them, and make myself king; but we must not think of that as yet: the nobles would not consent to it. I have sounded, but I find the time for that has not yet arrived; I must first dazzle these gentlemen by my exploits.” In truth, he was convinced, at this period, that he had no chance of escaping destruction but by persisting in his oriental expedition. The intelligence of the tumult at Vienna, and the appearance of approaching hostilities between Austria and France, induced Napoleon to change his plan; and he earnestly represented to the Directory the impolicy of continuing the Egyptian project at such a crisis. But the rulers of France were now thoroughly awakened to the danger they ran from the ascendancy of Napoleon, and the only answer they made to his representation was a positive order to leave Paris on the 3d May. This led to a warm altercation between him and the Directory, in the course of which he resorted to his former manœuvre of tendering his resignation. But on this occasion it did not succeed. Presenting him with a pen, Rewbell said coldly, “You wish to retire from the service, general? If you do, the Republic will doubtless lose a brave and skilful chief; but it has still enough of sons who will not abandon it.” Merlin upon this interposed, and put an end to so dangerous an altercation; and Napoleon, swallowing the affront, prepared to follow out his Egyptian expedition—saying, in private to Bourrienne, “The pear is not yet ripe; let us depart. We shall return when the moment is arrived.”¹

¹ Hard. vi.

513, 514.

Bour. ii. 48,

54. Th. ix.

73.

Napoleon, having completed his preparations, arrived at Toulon on the 9th May 1798, and immediately took the command of the army. The realisation of his long-cherished hopes filled the mind of the young hero with the most enthusiastic anticipation: like the fabled hero of Tasso, his mind burned with the prospect of glories in Egypt, and on the banks of the Nile.* Seldom had a more splendid armament appeared on the ocean. The fleet consisted of 13 ships of the line, two of 64 guns, 14 frigates, 72 brigs and cutters, and 400 transports. It bore thirty-six thousand soldiers of all arms, and above ten thousand sailors. Before embarking, the general-in-chief, after his usual custom, addressed the following proclamation to his troops:—"Soldiers! You are one of the wings of the Army of England; you have made war in mountains, plains, and cities; it remains to make it on the ocean. The Roman legions, whom you have often imitated, but not yet equalled, combated Carthage, by turns, on the seas and on the plains of Zama. Victory never deserted their standards, because they never ceased to be brave, patient, and united. Soldiers! the eyes of Europe are upon you; you have great destinies to accomplish, battles to fight, dangers and fatigues to overcome; you are about to do more than you have yet done for the prosperity of your country, the happiness of man, and your own glory. The genius of liberty, which has rendered, from its birth, the Republic the arbiter of Europe, has now determined that it should become so of the seas, and of the most distant nations." In such magnificent mystery did this great man envelope his designs, even when on the eve of their execution. One of the last acts of Napoleon, before embarking, was to issue a humane proclamation to the military

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21.

Napoleon
arrives at
Toulon.
His procla-
mation to
the soldiers.
His last act
a humane
one.

* "Parte; e porta un desio d'eterna ed alma
Gloria, ch' a nobil core è sferza e sprone.
A magnanime imprese intenta ha l'alma,
Ed insolite cose oprar dispone;
Scorrer l'Egitto e penetrar sin dove
Fuor d'incognito fonte il Nilo move."

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¹ Bour. ii.
48, 59. Th.
ix. 81. Jom.
x. 391.

commissioners of the 9th division, in which Toulon was situated, in which he severely censured the cruel application of one of the harsh laws of the 19th Fructidor to old men above seventy years of age, children in infancy, and women with child, who had been seized and shot for violating that tyrannical edict. This interposition gave universal satisfaction, and added another laurel of a purer colour to those which already encircled the brows of the general.¹

22.
The expedi-
tion sets
sail.
19th May.

At length, on the 19th May, the fleet set sail in the finest weather, amidst the discharges of cannon and the acclamations of an immense crowd of inhabitants. The Orient grounded at leaving the harbour, by reason of its enormous bulk: this was taken as a sinister omen by the sailors, more alive than any other class of men to superstitious impressions. The fleet sailed in the first instance towards Genoa, and thence to Ajaccio and Civita Castellana, and having effected a junction with the squadrons in those harbours, bore away with a fair wind for Malta. In coasting the shores of Italy, they descried from on board the Orient the snowy summits of the Alps in the extreme distance. Napoleon gazed with intense feeling at the mountains which had been the witnesses of his early achievements. "I cannot," said he, "behold without emotion the land of Italy; these mountains command the plains where I have so often led the French to victory. Now we are bound for the East; with them victory is still secure." His conversation was peculiarly animated during the whole voyage; every headland, every promontory, recalled some glorious exploit of ancient history; and his imagination kindled with fresh fire as the fleet approached the shores of Asia, and the scenes of the greatest deeds which have made illustrious the annals of mankind.²

² Bour. ii.
62, 72, 74, 76.
Th. ix. 82.23.
Arrives off
Malta, which
capitulates
without fir-
ing a shot.
16th June.

On the 16th June, after a prosperous voyage, the white cliffs and superb fortifications of Malta appeared in dazzling brilliancy above the unruffled sea. The fleet anchored before the harbour which had so gloriously resisted the whole force of the Turks under Solyman the

Magnificent: its bastions were stronger, its artillery more numerous, than under the heroic Lavalette; but the spirit of the Order was gone. A few hundred chevaliers, lost in effeminacy and indolence, intrusted to three thousand feeble mercenaries and as many militia the defence of the place; and its noble works seemed ready to become the prey of any invader who had inherited the ancient spirit of the defenders of Christendom. Before leaving France, the capitulation of the place had been secured by secret intelligence with the Grand Master and principal officers, who had, as the reward of their treachery, been struck off the list of French emigrants.* Desaix and Savary landed, and advanced without opposition to the foot of the ramparts. Terms of accommodation were speedily agreed on: the town was surrendered on condition that the Grand Master should obtain 600,000 francs, a principality in Germany, or a pension for life of 300,000 francs; the French chevaliers were promised a pension of 700 francs a-year each; and the tricolor flag speedily waved on the ancient bulwark of the Christian world.¹

¹ Th. x. 85.
Bour. ii. 65.
Savary, i. 30.
Jom. x. 392,
393. Miot,
ix. 10.

So strongly were the generals impressed with their good fortune on this occasion, that, in passing through the impregnable defences, Caffarelli said to Napoleon—"It is well, general, that there was some one within to open the gates to us: we should have had more trouble in making our way through, if the place had been empty." On entering into the place, the French knew not how to congratulate themselves on the address on the one side, and pusillanimity on the other, which had obtained for them, without firing a shot, so immense an acquisition. They were never weary of examining the boundless fortifications, and stupendous monuments of perseverance, which it contained; the luxury and magnificence of the palaces which the Grand Masters had erected during the many centuries

^{24.}
Its prodigious
strength.

* "Vous n'ignorez pas que Malte a été rendu et livré par des officiers Français, qui, pour prix de leur bons et loyaux services, ont été razés de la liste des émigrés, et pensionnés."—*Lettre secrète de Rastudt*, July 26, 1798; *Custlereagh Papers*, i. 268.

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¹ Jom. x.
399. Savary,
i. 32. Bour.
ii. 65, 66.
Hard. vi. 75.

of their inglorious repose, and the incomparable harbour, which allowed the 'Orient to touch the quay, and was capable of containing six hundred sail of the line. In securing and organising the new colony, Napoleon displayed his wonted activity. Its innumerable batteries were speedily armed, and General Vaubois was left at the head of three thousand men to superintend its defence. All the Turkish prisoners found in the galleys were set at liberty, and scattered through the fleet, in order to produce a moral influence on the Mahometan population in the countries to which their course was bound.¹

25.
Secret of its
easy conquest.

The secret of the easy conquest of this impregnable island by Napoleon, is to be found in the estrangement of the chevaliers of other nations from Baron Homspech, the Grand Master, whom they disliked on account of his German descent, and the intrigues long before carried on among the knights of French and Italian birth by a secret agent of Napoleon's. Such was the division produced by these circumstances that the garrison was incapable of making any resistance; and the leading knights, themselves chiefs in the conspiracy, had so prepared matters, by disarming batteries, providing neither stores nor ammunition, and disposing the troops in disadvantageous situations, that resistance was from the first perfectly hopeless. No sooner, however, were the gates delivered up, than these unworthy successors of the defenders of Christendom repented of their weakness. The treasure of St John, the accumulation of ages, the silver plate of all the churches, palaces, and hospitals, were seized on with merciless avidity; and all the ships of war, artillery, and arsenals of the Order, appropriated to the uses of the Republic.²*

² Hard. vi.
70, 76, 77.

Having secured this important conquest, and left a

* So early as 14th November 1797, Napoleon had commenced his intrigues with the Knights of Malta. On that day he wrote to Talleyrand: "You will receive herewith a copy of the commission I have given to citizen Pousseligue, and my letter to the Consul of Malta. The true object of his mission is to put the finishing hand to the projects we have in view on Malta."—*Conf. Desp.*

sufficient garrison to maintain it for the Republic, Napoleon set sail for Egypt. The voyage was uninterrupted by any accident; and the general, enjoying the beautiful sky of the Mediterranean, remained constantly on deck, conversing with Monge and Berthollet on subjects of science, the age of the world, the probable mode of its destruction, the forms of religion, the decline of the Byzantine empire. These interesting themes were often interrupted, however, by the consideration of what would occur if the fleet were to encounter the squadron of Nelson. Admiral Bruéys, forcibly struck by the crowded state of the ships, and the encumbrance which the soldiers would prove in the event of an action, and especially to the 'Orient, which had nearly two thousand men on board, could not conceal his apprehensions of the result of such an engagement. Napoleon, less accustomed to maritime affairs, contemplated the event with more calmness. The soldiers were constantly trained to work the great guns; and as there were five hundred on board each ship of the line, he flattered himself that in a close action they would succeed by boarding in discomfiting the enemy.¹

Meanwhile, Nelson's fleet had arrived on the 20th June before Naples; from thence he hastened to Messina, where he received intelligence of the surrender of Malta, and that the French were steering for Candia. He instantly directed his course for Alexandria, where he arrived on the 29th, and finding no enemy there, set sail for the north, imagining that the expedition was bound for the Dardanelles. It is a singular circumstance that, on the night of the 22d June, the French and English fleets crossed each other's track, without either party discovering their enemy. During the night, as the French fleet approached Egypt, the discharge of cannon was heard on the right; it was the signal which Nelson gave

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26.

His conversation during the remainder of the voyage. June 19.

¹ Nap. ii. 169. Bour. ii. 73, 83. Th. x. 87.

27.

Movements of Nelson; who misses the French fleet.

NAPOLEON to TALLEYRAND, 14th Nov. 1797. In the January following his agent contrived, by liberal gifts, promises, and entertainments, to seduce from their allegiance all that numerous part of the garrison and knights who were inclined to democratic principles.—HARD. v. 457, 460.

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¹ Savary, i.
35. Bour.
ii. 84. Th.
x. 28. Miot,
74. Nap. ii.
167. James,
ii. 229.

28.

Egypt is
discovered.
Napoleon
lands, and
advances
against
Alexandria,
which is
taken.

to his squadron, which at this moment was not more than *five leagues* distant, steering northward from the coast of Egypt, where he had been vainly seeking the French armament. For several hours the two fleets were within a few leagues of each other. Had he sailed a little further to the left, or passed during the day, the two squadrons would have met, and an earlier battle of Aboukir might have changed the fortunes of the world.¹

At length, on the morning of the 1st July, the shore of Egypt was discovered stretching as far as the eye could reach from east to west. Low sandhills, surmounted by a few scattered palms, presented little of interest to the ordinary eye; but the minarets of Alexandria, the needle of Cleopatra, and the pillar of Pompey, reawakened those dreams of ancient grandeur and oriental conquest which had long floated in the mind of Napoleon. It was soon learned that the English fleet had only left the roads *two days before*, and had departed for the coasts of Syria in quest of the French expedition. The general forthwith pressed the landing of the troops: it was begun on the evening of their arrival, and continued with the utmost expedition through the whole night; and at one in the morning, as the state of the tide permitted the galley on which he stood to approach the shore, he immediately disembarked, and formed three thousand men amidst the sandhills of the desert. At daybreak, Napoleon advanced at the head of about five thousand men, being all that were yet formed, towards Alexandria. The shouts from the ramparts, and the discharge of some pieces of artillery, left no doubt as to the hostile intentions of the Mamelukes; an assault was immediately ordered, and in a short time the French grenadiers reached the top of the walls. Kleber was struck by a ball on the head, and Menou thrown down from the top of the rampart to the bottom; but the ardour of the French soldiers overcame every resistance; and the negligence of the Turks having left one of the principal gates open during the assault, the

defenders of the walls were speedily taken in rear by those who rushed in at that entrance, and fled in confusion into the interior of the city. The conquerors were astonished to find a large space filled with ruins between the exterior walls and the inhabited houses—an ordinary feature in Asiatic towns, where the tyranny of the government usually occasions an incessant diminution of population, and ramparts, even of recent formation, are speedily found to be too extensive for the declining numbers of the people. The soldiers, who, notwithstanding their military ardour, did not share the eastern visions of their chief, were soon dissatisfied with the poverty and wretchedness which they found amongst the inhabitants; the brilliant anticipations of oriental luxury gave way to the sad realities of a life of privation; and men, in want of food and lodging, derived little satisfaction from what they heard of the obelisks of the Ptolemies, or the sarcophagus of Alexander.¹

¹ Berthier,
3.6. Savary,
i. 35, 37, 38.
Th. x. 88.

Before advancing into the interior of the country, Napoleon issued the following proclamation to his troops:—

“Soldiers! You are about to undertake a conquest fraught with incalculable effects upon the commerce and civilisation of the world. You will inflict upon England the most grievous stroke she can sustain before receiving her deathblow. The people with whom we are about to live are Mahometans. Their first article of faith is, ‘There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.’ Contradict them not. Behave to them as you have done to the Jews and the Italians; show the same regard to the Muftis and Imaums as you did to the Rabbis and Bishops; manifest for the ceremonies of the Koran the same respect as you have shown to the convents and the synagogues, the religion of Moses and that of Jesus Christ. The first town we are about to enter was built by Alexander; at every step we shall meet with recollections worthy to excite the emulation of Frenchmen.” This address contains a faithful picture of the feeling of the

29.
His first
proclamation,
after
landing, to
his troops.

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¹ Lav. i. 287.
Bour. ii. 77,
78. Th. x.
91.

French army on religious subjects at this period. They not only considered the Christian faith as an entire fabrication, but were for the most part ignorant of its very elements. Lavalette has recorded, that hardly one of them had ever been in a church; and in Palestine, they were ignorant even of the names of the holiest places in sacred history.¹

30.
Description
of Egypt.

Egypt, on which the French army was now fairly landed, and which became the theatre of such memorable exploits, is one of the most singular countries in the world, not only from its geographical position, but its physical conformation. It consists entirely of the valley of the Nile, which, taking its rise in the mountains of Abyssinia, after traversing for six hundred leagues the arid deserts of Africa, and receiving the tributary waters of the Bahr-el-Abiad, perhaps the greater stream of the two, precipitates itself by the cataracts of Sennaar into the lower valley, two hundred leagues long, which forms the country of Egypt. Altogether the course of the Nile, from its source in the chain of Djebel-el-Kamar, is twenty-seven hundred miles long. This valley, though of such immense length, is in general,—until it reaches the Delta or plain at its mouth, formed by the deposits of its floods during a long succession of ages,—only from one to six leagues in breadth, and bounded on either side by the rocky mountains of the deserts. Its habitable and cultivated portion is entirely confined to that part of the surface which is overflowed by the inundations of the fertilising stream; as far as the waters rise, the soil is of extraordinary fertility; beyond it the glowing desert is alone to be seen. At the distance of fifty leagues from the sea, the Nile divides itself into two branches, which fall into the Mediterranean, one at Rosetta, the other at Damietta. The triangle having these two branches for its sides, and the sea for its base, is called the Delta, and constitutes the richest and most

fertile district of Egypt, being perfectly level, intersected by canals, and covered with the most luxuriant vegetation. The soil of this singular valley was originally as barren as the arid ridges which adjoin it; but it has acquired an extraordinary degree of richness from the well-known inundations of the Nile. These floods, arising from the warmth of spring, followed by the melting of the snow and heavy rains of July and August in the mountains of Abyssinia, cause the river to rise gradually, during a period of nearly three months. It begins to swell in the middle of May, and continues to rise till the end of August, when it attains the height of sixteen or eighteen feet above its ordinary level. The fertility of the country is just in proportion to the height of the inundation: hence it is watched with the utmost anxiety by the inhabitants, and public rejoicings are ordered when the *Nilometer* at Cairo indicates a foot or two greater depth of water than usual.¹

It never rains in Egypt. Centuries may elapse without more than a shower of drizzling mist moistening the surface of the soil. It is said that it has not rained in Egypt for seventeen hundred years. Hence cultivation can only be extended beyond the level to which the water rises by an artificial system of irrigation; and the efforts made in this respect by the ancient inhabitants, constitute, perhaps, the most wonderful of the many monuments of industry which they have left to succeeding ages. During the inundation, the level plain of Egypt is flooded with water; the villages, detached from each other, communicate only by boats, and, surmounted by their palms and sycamores, appear like the islands on the Lagunæ of Venice, in the midst of the watery waste. "The inundation," says an eloquent observer, "begins in May, attains its full height in August, and thenceforth diminishes, until freshly swollen in the following year. The stream, economised within its channel as far as the first cataract, then spreads abroad its beneficent deluge over

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¹ Malte-Brun, x. 3.
Th. x. 92,
93. Bour.
ii. 271, 275.
Savary, i.
47, 49.

31.
Astonishing
effects of the
inundations
of the Nile.

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the vast valley. Then it is that Egypt presents the most striking of its Protean aspects, becoming an archipelago studded with green islands, and bounded only by the chain of the Libyan hills, and the purple range of the Mokattam mountains. Every isle is crowned with a village, or an antique temple, and shadowy with palm-trees or acacia groves. Every city becomes a Venice, and the bazars display their richest and gayest cloths and tapestries to the illuminations that are reflected from the streaming streets. The earth is sheltered from the burning sun under the cool bright veil of waters; the labour of the husbandman is suspended, and it is the season of universal festivity. Boatmen alone are busy, but it would seem to be pleasant business; for the sound of music is never silent beneath those large white sails, that now glitter in the moonlight, and now gleam ruddily, reflecting the fragrant watch-fires on the deck.”* No sooner, however, have the floods retired, than the soil, covered to a considerable depth by a rich slime, is cultivated and sown; and the seed, vegetating quickly in that rich mould, and under a tropical sun, springs up, and in three months yields a hundred and sometimes a hundred and fifty fold. During the whole winter months the soil is covered with the richest harvests, besprinkled with flowers, and dotted by innumerable flocks; but in March the great heats begin, the earth cracks from excessive drought, vegetation disappears, and the country is fast relapsing into the sterility of the desert, when the annual floods of the Nile again cover it with their vivifying waters.¹

¹ Th. x. 95.
Bour.ii.270,
275. Malte-
Brun, x. 30,
39.

32.
Productions
of the coun-
try. Its
foreign
commerce.

All the varied productions of the temperate and the torrid zone flourish in this favoured region. Besides the ordinary grains of Europe, Egypt produces the finest crops of rice, maize, sugar, indigo, cotton, and senna. It has no oil, but the opposite coasts of Greece furnish it in abundance; nor coffee, but it is supplied in profusion

* *The Crescent and the Cross*, by WARBURTON, vol. i. p. 37, 38.

from the adjoining mountains of Arabia. Hardly any trees are to be seen over its vast extent; a few palms and sycamores, in the villages, alone rise above the luxuriant vegetation of the plain. Its horses are celebrated over all the world for their beauty, their spirit, and their incomparable docility; and it possesses the camel, that wonderful animal, which can support thirst for days together, tread without fatigue the moving sands, and traverse like a living ship the ocean of the desert. Every year, immense caravans arrive at Cairo from Syria and Arabia on the one side, and the interior of Africa on the other. They bring all that belongs to the regions of the sun—gold, ivory, ostrich feathers, gum, aromatics of all sorts, coffee, tobacco, spices, perfumes, with the numerous slaves which mark the degradation of the human species in those favoured countries. Cairo becomes, at that period, an *entrepôt* for the finest productions of the earth, of those which the genius of the West will never be able to rival, but for which their opulence and luxury afford a never-failing demand. Thus the commerce of Egypt is the only one in the globe which never can decay; but must, under a tolerable government, continue to flourish, as long as the warmth of Asia furnishes articles which the industry and perseverance of Europe are desirous of possessing.¹

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1798.

¹ Malte-
Brun, x. 37,
45. Nap. ii.
200, 205.
Th. x. 95,
97.

In ancient times, Egypt and Libya, it is well known, were the granary of Rome; and the masters of the world depended for their subsistence on the floods of the Nile.² Even at the time of its conquest by the Mahometans, the former is said to have contained twenty millions of souls, including those who dwelt in the adjoining Oases of the desert. This vast population is by no means incredible, if the prodigious fertility of the soil, wherever water can be conveyed, is considered; and the extent to which, under a paternal government, the system of artificial irrigation can be carried. It is to the general decay of all the great establishments for the watering of the country, which the

33.
Decay of the
population
since ancient
times, and
importance
of Alexan-
dria.

² Tac. Ann.
xii. 32.

CHAP.
XXVI.

1798.

¹ Nap. ii.
205, 212,
213. Bour.
ii. 275, 280.
Malte-Brun,
x. 37, 49.

34.
Account of
the inhabi-
tants of the
country.
The Mame-
lukes.

industry of antiquity had constructed, that we are to ascribe the present limited extent of agriculture, and the perpetual encroachments which the sands of the desert are making on the region of human cultivation. Alexandria, selected by the genius of Alexander the Great to be the capital of his vast empire, is situated at the opening of one of the old mouths of the Nile, which, however, is now choked with sand, and only covered with water in extraordinary floods. Its harbour, capable of containing all the navies of Europe, is the only safe or accessible port between Carthage and the shores of Palestine. Vessels drawing twenty-one feet of water can enter without difficulty, but those of larger dimensions only when lightened of their guns. Rosetta and Damietta admit only barks, the bar at the entrance of their harbours having only six feet of water.¹

At the period of this expedition to Egypt, the population of the country, consisting of two millions five hundred thousand souls, was divided into four classes; the Mamelukes or Circassians, the Janizaries, the Arabs, and the Copts. The Mamelukes, who were the actual rulers of the country, consisted of young Circassians, brought in infancy from their native country, and transported into Egypt, to form the armed force of that province of the Turkish empire. Bred up in camps, without any knowledge of their country or relations, without either a home or kindred, they prided themselves solely on their horses, their arms, and their military prowess. This singular militia was governed by twenty-four Beys, the least considerable of whom was followed by five or six hundred Mamelukes, whom they maintained and equipped. This body of twelve thousand horsemen, each of whom was attended by two helots or servants, constituted the military strength of the country, and formed the finest body of cavalry in the world. "The bits in their horses' mouths are so powerful, that the most fiery steeds are speedily checked, even at full career, by an ordinary hand.

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Their stirrups are extremely short, and give the rider great power both in commanding his horse and striking with his sabre; and the pommel and back part of the saddle are so high that the horseman, though wounded, can scarcely lose his balance. He can even sleep without falling, as he would do in an arm-chair. The horse is burdened by no baggage or provisions, all of which are carried by the rider's servants; while the Mameluke himself, covered with shawls and turbans, is protected from the strokes of a sabre. They are all splendidly armed: in their girdle is always to be seen a pair of pistols and a poniard; from the saddle is suspended another pair of pistols and a hatchet; on one side is a sabre, on the other a blunderbuss; and the servant on foot carries a carbine. They seldom parry with the sword, as their fine blades would break in the collision, but avoid the strokes of their adversary by skill in wheeling their horses, while they trust to his impetus to sever his head from his body, without either cut or thrust."¹

¹ Miot, 61.
63. Nap. ii.
213. Th. x.
97.

The office of Bey was not hereditary; sometimes it descended to the son, more generally to the favourite officer of the deceased commander. The Beys divided the country among them in feudal sovereignty; were nominally equal, but necessarily subject to the ascendant of talent; they exhibited alternately the anarchy of feudal rule, and the severity of military despotism. The Mamelukes seldom have been perpetuated beyond the third or fourth generation on the shores of the Nile; and their numbers were only kept up by annual accessions of active youths from the mountains of Circassia. The force of the Beys was at one period very considerable; but it had been seriously weakened by the Russian conquests in Georgia, which cut off one source from which their numbers were recruited; and at the time when the French landed in Egypt, it was not a half of what it formerly had been—a circumstance which contributed more than any other to the rapid success with which the invasion of the latter was

35.
Office of
Bey; and
the Jani-
zaries.

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¹ Th. x. 92.
97. Nap. ii.
216. Hard.
vi. 92, 93.
Nap. ii. 214,
215.

attended. The Turks or Janizaries, forming the second part of the population, were introduced on occasion of the conquest of Egypt by the Sultauns of Constantinople. They were about two hundred thousand in number, almost all inscribed on the books of the Janizaries, to acquire their privileges; but, as usual in the Ottoman empire, with a very few of their number in reality following the standard of the Prophet. Those actually in arms formed the guards of the Pasha, who still maintained a shadow of authority for the Sultaun of Constantinople; but the great majority were engaged in trades and handicrafts in the towns, and kept in a state of complete subjection to the haughty rule of the Mamelukes.¹

36.
The Arabs.

The Arabs constituted the great body of the population—at least two millions out of the two millions and a half of which the inhabitants consisted. Their condition was infinitely various; some forming a body of nobles, who were the chief proprietors of the country; others, the doctors of the law and the ministers of religion; a third class, the little proprietors, farmers, and cultivators. The whole instruction of the country, the maintenance of its schools, its mosques, its laws, and religion, was in their hands. A numerous body, living on the borders of the desert, retained the roving propensities and barbaric vices of the Bedouin race. Mounted on camels or horses, driving numerous herds before them, escorting or pillaging the caravans which come to Cairo from Lybia and Arabia, they alternately cultivated their fields on the banks of the Nile, or fled from its shores loaded with the spoils of plundered villages. The indifference or laxity of the Turkish rule almost always suffered their excesses to escape with impunity. Industry languished, and population declined in the districts exposed to their ravages; and the plunderers, retreating into the desert, resumed the roving life of their forefathers, and reappeared on the frontiers of civilisation, only, like the moving sands, to devour the traces of human industry. A hundred, or a

hundred and twenty thousand of these marauders wandered through the wilderness which bordered on either side the valley of the Nile: they could send into the field twenty thousand men, admirably mounted, and matchless in the skill with which their horses were managed, but destitute of discipline, or of the firmness requisite to sustain the attack of regular forces.¹

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¹ Volney's
Egypt, 137.
Th. x. 98,
99. Nap. ii.
218, 219,
220. Th.
ix. 100, 101.

The Copts constituted the fourth class of the people. They are the descendants of the native inhabitants of the country—of those Egyptians who so early excelled in the arts of civilisation, and have left so many monuments of immortal endurance. Now, insulted and degraded, on account of the Christian faith which they still profess, they were cast down to the lowest stage of society—their numbers not exceeding two hundred thousand, and their occupations being of the meanest description. By one of those wonderful revolutions which mark the lapse of ages, the greater part of the slaves in the country were to be found among the descendants of the followers of Sesostris. At the period of the arrival of the French, two Beys, Ibrahim Bey and Mourad Bey, divided between them the sovereignty of Egypt. The first, rich, sagacious, and powerful, was, by a sort of tacit understanding, invested with the civil government of the country; the latter, young, active, and enterprising, was at the head of its military establishments. His ardour, courage, and brilliant qualities, rendered him the idol of the soldiers, who advanced confident of victory under his standard.²

37.
And the
Copts. Ibra-
him Bey and
Mourad
Bey, the
rulers of the
country.

² Th. ix.
100, 101.

The policy of Napoleon on invading a country uniformly was, to raise the numerous governed against the few governors, and thus paralyse its means of resistance by arming one part of the population against the other. On approaching Egypt, he at once saw that, by rousing the Arabs against the domination of the Beys, not only would the power of the latter be weakened, but a numerous and valuable body of auxiliaries might be procured for the invading force. To accomplish this object, it was neces-

38.
Policy of
Napoleon
on invading
Egypt.

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sary, above all things, to avoid a religious war, which would infallibly have united all ranks of the Mussulmans against the invaders, and to gain the affections of the Arabs by flattering their leaders, and indulging their prejudices. For this purpose he left the administration of justice and the affairs of religion exclusively in the hands of the Scheiks, and addressed himself to the feelings of the multitude through the medium of their established teachers. For the Mahometan religion and its precepts he professed the highest veneration; for the restoration of Arabian independence the most ardent desire; to the Beys alone he swore eternal and uncompromising hostility. In this manner he hoped to awaken in his favour both the national feelings of the most numerous part of the people, and the religious enthusiasm which is ever so powerful in the East; and, inverting the passions of the Crusades, to rouse in behalf of European conquest the vehemence of Oriental fanaticism.¹*

¹ Nap. ii.
226, 227.
Th. x. 104,
105.

39.
His procla-
mation to
the Eryp-
tians.

Proceeding on these principles, Napoleon addressed the following singular proclamation to the Egyptian people:—
“ People of Egypt ! you will be told by our enemies that I am come to destroy your religion. Believe them not. Tell them that I am come to restore your rights, punish your usurpers, and revive the true worship of Mahomet, which I venerate more than the Mamelukes. Tell them that all men are equal in the sight of God ; that wisdom,

* “ The French army,” says Napoleon, “ since the Revolution, had practised no sort of worship ; in Italy, even, the soldiers never went to church : we took advantage of that circumstance to present the army to the Mussulmans as readily disposed to embrace their faith. I had many discussions with the Scheiks on this subject : and after many weeks spent in fruitless discussion, they arrived at the conclusion that circumcision, and the prohibition against wine, might be dispensed with, provided not a tenth, but a fifth of the income was spent in acts of beneficence.” The general-in-chief then traced out the plan of a mosque, which was to exceed that of Jemilazar, and declared it was to be a monument of the conversion of the army. In all this, however, he sought only to gain time. Napoleon was, upon this, declared the friend of the Prophet, and specially placed under his protection. The report spread generally that, before the expiry of a year, the soldiers would wear the turban. This produced the very best effect ; the people ceased to regard them as idolators.—*Nap. in MONTHELOM*, ii. 211, 212.

talents, and virtue, alone constitute the difference between them. And what are the virtues which distinguish the Mamelukes, that entitle them to appropriate all the enjoyments of life to themselves? If Egypt is their farm, let them show the tenure from God by which they hold it. No! God is just, and full of pity to the suffering people. For long a horde of slaves, bought in the Caucasus and Georgia, have tyrannised over the finest part of the world; but God, upon whom everything depends, has decreed that this tyranny should terminate. Cadis, Scheiks, Imaums, tell the people that we too *are true Mussulmans*. Are we not the men who have destroyed the Pope, who preached eternal war against the Mussulmans? Are we not those who have crushed the chevaliers of Malta, because those madmen believed that they should constantly make war on your faith? Are we not those who have been in every age the friends of the Most High, and the enemies of his enemies? Thrice happy those who are with us; they shall prosper in all their undertakings: woe to those who shall join the Mamelukes to resist us; they shall perish without mercy!"¹

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¹ Bour. ii.
96, 98.

Napoleon was justly desirous to advance to Cairo before the inundations of the Nile rendered military operations in the level country impossible; but for this purpose it was necessary to accelerate his movements, as the season of the rise of the waters was fast approaching. He made, accordingly, the requisite arrangements with extraordinary celerity; left three thousand men in garrison at Alexandria under Kleber, with a distinguished officer of engineers to put the works in a posture of defence; established the civil government in the persons of the Scheiks and Imaums; gave directions for sounding the harbour, with a view to placing the fleet in safety, if the draught of water would permit the entry of the larger vessels; collected a flotilla on the Nile to accompany the troops, and assigned to it as a place of rendezvous Ramanieh, a small town on that river, situated on the route to Cairo, whither he

40.
His arrangements for
advancing
to Cairo.

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6th July.

¹ Berthier,
9, 11. Th.
x. 107, 108.41.
March of
the advanced
guard
across the
desert:
their sufferings.

proposed to advance across the desert of Damanhour; while at the same time he wrote to the French ambassador at Constantinople to assure the Porte of his anxious desire to remain at peace with the Turkish government.* On the 6th July the army set out on their march, being now reduced, by the garrison of Malta and that recently left in Alexandria, to thirty thousand men. At the same time Kleber's division, under the orders of Dugua, was directed to move upon Rosetta, to secure that town, and facilitate the entrance of the flotilla into the Nile.¹

Desaix was at the head of the vanguard; his troops began their march in the evening, and advanced with tolerable cheerfulness during the cool of the night; but when morning dawned, and they found themselves traversing a boundless plain of sand, without water or shade—with a burning sun above their head, and troops of Arabs flitting across the horizon, to cut off the weary or stragglers—they were filled with the most gloomy forebodings. The sky glowed like a fiery furnace; not a breath of air was to be felt, save when a light breeze brought a gust of the hot wind of the Moorish desert to their wearied frames.† Already the desire for rest had taken possession of their minds; they had flattered themselves that they were to find repose and a terrestrial paradise in Egypt; and when they saw themselves, instead, surrounded by a pathless desert, parched by thirst, and suf-

* "The army has arrived; it has disembarked at Alexandria, and carried that town; we are now in full march for Cairo. Use your utmost efforts to convince the Porte of our firm resolution to continue to live on the best terms with his government. An ambassador to Constantinople has just been named for that purpose, who will arrive there without delay."—*Letter to the Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople*, 8th July 1798; *Corresp. Secrète*, v. 199.

† "Sembra il ciel nell' aspetto atra fornace :

Nè cosa appar, che gli occhi almen ristaure.

Nelle spelunche sue zefiro tace,

E'n tutto è fermo il vaneggiar dell' aure :

Solo vi soffia (e par vampa di face)

Vento che move dall' arene maure ;

Che gravoso e spiacente, e seno e gote

Co' densi fiati ad or ad or percote."

Gerusalemme Liberata, xiii. 56.

fering from hunger, their discontent broke out in loud lamentations. All the wells on the road were either filled up or exhausted; hardly a few drops of muddy and brackish water could be found to quench their burning thirst. At Damanhour, a few houses afforded shelter at night only to the general's staff; the remainder of the troops bivouacked in squares on the sand, incessantly harassed by the clouds of Arabs who wheeled round their position, and sometimes approached within fifty yards of the videttes. After a rest of two days, the army resumed its march across the sandy wilderness, still observed in the distance by the hostile Bedouins; and soon the suffering from thirst became so excessive, that even the strongest heads and firmest resolution gave way before it. The scene realised all that the ardent mind of Lucan had conceived of the sufferings of Pompey's soldiers, all that the imagination of Tasso had figured of the burning wilderness.* Lannes and Murat threw themselves on the sand, and gave way to every expression of despair.† In the midst of the general depression, a sudden gleam of hope illuminated the countenances of the soldiers; a

* "S' alcun giammai tra frondeggiani rive
Puro vide stagnar liquido argento.
O giù precipitose ir acque vive
Per alpe o'n spiaggia erbosa a passo lento,
Quelle al vago desio forma e descrive,
E ministra materia al suo tormento;
Che l' imagine lor gelida e molle
L' asciuga e scalda, e nel pensier ribolle.

Vedi le membra de' guerrier robuste,
Cui nè cammin per aspra terra preso,
Nè ferrea salma onde gir sempre onusto,
Nè domò ferro alla lor morte inteso;
Ch'or risoluto e dal calore aduste
Giacciono, a se medesme inutil peso,
E vive nelle vene occulto foco,
Che pascendo le strugge a poco a poco."

Gerusalemme Liberata, xiii. 60, 61.

† The sufferings of the army are thus vividly depicted in Desaix's despatch to Napoleon: "If all the army does not pass the desert with the rapidity of lightning, it will perish. It does not contain water to quench the thirst of a thousand men. The greater part of what it does is contained in cisterns, which, once emptied, are not replenished by any perennial fountain. The

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lake appeared in the arid wilderness, with villages and palm-trees clearly reflected in its glassy surface.

"Conspicit vicinos sitiens exercitus amnes."*

¹ Sav. i. 50.
Berth. 11,
12. Las
Cas. i. 221.
Miot, 26, 27.

Instantly the parched troops hastened toward the enchanting object; but it receded from their steps: in vain they pressed on with burning impatience; it for ever fled from their approach: and they had at length the mortification of discovering that they had been deceived by the *mirage* of the desert.†

42.
Arrive on
the Nile,
and actions
with the
Mamelukes.

The firmness and resolution of Napoleon, however, triumphed over every obstacle; the approach to the Nile was shortly indicated by the increasing bodies of Arabs, with a few Mamelukes, who watched the columns; and at length the long-wished-for stream was seen glittering through the sandhills of the desert. At the joyful sight the ranks were completely broken; men, horses, and camels, rushed simultaneously to the banks, and threw themselves into the stream; all heads were instantly lowered into the water; and in the transports of delight, the sufferings of the preceding days were speedily forgotten. It was some time, however, before repeated draughts restored strength and animation to their wearied frames.‡

villages are huts, without resources of any kind. For heaven's sake, do not leave us in this situation; order us rapidly to advance or retire. I am in despair at being obliged to write to you in the language of anxiety; when we are out of our present horrible position, I hope my wonted firmness will return."—*Corresp. Confid. de Napoleon*, v. 217.

* "The thirsting army beholds at hand streams."—LUCAN.

† M. Monge, who accompanied the expedition, published the following account of this singular illusion. "When the surface of the earth has been during the day thoroughly heated by the rays of the sun, and towards evening begins to cool, the higher objects of the landscape seem to rise as out of a general inundation. The villages appear to rise out of a vast lake; under each is its image inverted, exactly as if it was in the midst of a glassy sheet of water. As you approach the village it recedes from the view; when you arrive at it, you find it is still in the midst of burning sand; and the deception begins anew with some more distant object." The phenomenon admits of an easy explanation on optical principles.—See Mior, 28, 32.

‡ "Incustoditos decurrit miles ad amnes;

Incumbit ripis, permissaque flumina turbat.

Continuus multis subitarum tractus aquarum,

Aëra non passus vacuis discurrere venis,

While the troops were thus assuaging their thirst, an alarm was given that the Mamelukes were approaching ; the drums beat to arms, and eight hundred horsemen, clad in glittering armour, soon appeared in sight. Finding, however, the leading division prepared, they passed on and attacked the division of Desaix, which was still in march ; but the troops rapidly forming in squares, with the artillery at the angles, dispersed the assailants by a single discharge of grape-shot. The whole army soon came up, and the flotilla having appeared in sight about the same time, the soldiers rested in plenty for a whole day beside the stream. A severe action had taken place on the Nile, between the French and Egyptian flotillas ; but the Asiatics were defeated, and the boats arrived at the destined spot at the precise hour assigned to them. The landscape now totally changed ; luxuriant verdure on the banks of the river succeeded to the arid uniformity of the desert ; incomparable fertility in the soil promised abundant supplies to the troops ; and the shade of palm-trees and sycamores afforded an enjoyment unknown to those who have never traversed an eastern wilderness.¹

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¹ Sav. i. 50.
Berth. 13.
Th. x. 110,
111. Las
Cas. i. 221.
Miot, 26, 29.

After a day's rest, the army pursued its march along the banks of the Nile, towards Chebreiss. Mourad Bey, with four thousand Mamelukes and Fellahs, or foot-soldiers, lay on the road, his left resting on the village, and his right supported by a flotilla of gunboats on the river. The French flotilla outstripped the march of the land forces, and engaged in a furious and doubtful combat with the enemy before the arrival of the army. Napoleon immediately formed his army in five divisions, each composed of squares six deep, with the artillery at the angles, and the grenadiers in platoons, to support the menaced points. The cavalry, who were only two hun-

43.
Severe combat at Chebreiss.

July 13.

Arctavit, clausitque animam : nec fervida pestis
Cedit adhuc : sed morbus egens, jam gurgite plenis
Visceribus, sibi poscit aquas. Mox robora nervis,
Et vires rediére vires."

LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, iv. 366.

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dred in number, still attenuated by the fatigues of the voyage, and wholly unfit to combat the formidable cavalry of the East, were placed in the centre of the square. No sooner had the troops approached within half a league of the enemy than the Mamelukes advanced, and, charging at full gallop, assailed their moving squares with loud cries, and the most determined intrepidity. The artillery opened upon them as soon as they approached within point-blank range, and the rolling fire of the infantry soon mowed down those who escaped the grape-shot. Animated by this success, the French right wing deployed and attacked the village, which was speedily carried. The Mamelukes retreated in disorder towards Cairo, with the loss of six hundred men, and the flotilla at the same time abandoned the scene of action, and drew off further up the Nile. This action, though by no means decisive, sufficed to familiarise the soldiers with the new species of enemy they had to encounter, and to inspire them with a well-founded confidence in the efficacy of their discipline and tactics to repel the assaults of the Arabian cavalry. The troops continued their march for seven days longer towards Cairo; their fatigues were extreme; and, as the villages were all deserted, it was with the utmost difficulty that subsistence could be obtained. The Nile, however, supplied them with water, and the sight of the Arabs, who constantly prowled round the horizon, impressed them with the necessity of keeping their ranks.¹

¹ Dum. ii.
134, 135.
Berth. 15,
16. Th. x.
112.

44.
The army
advances
towards
Cairo, and
arrives in
sight of the
Mameluke
forces.

At length the army arrived within sight of the PYRAMIDS, and the city of Cairo. All eyes were instantly turned upon the oldest monuments in the world, and the sight of those gigantic structures reanimated the spirit of the soldiers, who had been bitterly lamenting the delights of Italy. Mourad Bey had there collected all his forces, consisting of eight thousand Mamelukes, and double that number of Fellahs, Arabs, and Copts. His camp was placed in the village of Embabeh, on the left bank of the Nile, which was fortified by rude field-works and forty

pieces of cannon; but the artillery was not mounted on carriages, and consequently could only fire in one direction. Between the troops and the pyramids extended a wide sandy plain, on which were stationed above eight thousand of the finest horsemen in the world, with their right resting on the village, and their left stretching towards the pyramids. A few thousand Arabs, assembled to pillage the vanquished, whoever they should be, filled up the space to the foot of those gigantic monuments. Napoleon no sooner discovered, by means of his telescopes, that the cannon in the intrenched camp were immovable, and could not be turned from the direction in which they were placed, than he resolved to move his army further to the right, towards the pyramids, in order to be beyond the reach, and out of the direction of the guns. The columns accordingly began to march; Desaix with his division in front, next Reynier, then Dugua, and lastly Vial* and Bon. The sight of the pyramids, and the anxious nature of the moment, inspired the French general with even more than his usual ardour; the sun glittered on those immense masses, which seemed to rise in height with every step the soldiers advanced, and the army, sharing his enthusiasm, gazed, as they marched, on the everlasting monuments. "Remember," said he, "that from the summit of those pyramids forty centuries contemplate your actions."¹

With his usual sagacity, Napoleon had taken extraordinary precautions to insure success against the formidable cavalry of the desert. The divisions were all drawn up as before, in hollow square six deep, the artillery at the angles, the generals and baggage in the centre. When they were in march, the two sides advanced in column—those in front and rear moved forward in their ranks; but the moment they were charged, the whole were to halt and face outwards on every side. When they were themselves to charge, the three front ranks were to break off

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¹ Th. x.
116. Nap.
ii. 234, 237.
Jom. xi.
408, 410.

45.
Napoleon's
preparations
to receive
the enemy.

* Vial commanded Menou's division upon this occasion.

and form the column of attack, those in rear remaining behind, still in square, but three deep only, to constitute the reserve. Napoleon had no fears of the result, if the infantry were steady; his only apprehension was that his soldiers, accustomed to charge, would yield to their impetuosity too soon, and would not be brought to the immovable firmness which this species of warfare required. Mourad Bey no sooner perceived the lateral movement of the French army, than, with a promptitude of decision worthy of a skilful general, he resolved to attack the columns while in the act of completing it. An extraordinary movement was immediately observed in the Mameluke line, and speedily seven thousand horsemen detached themselves from the remainder of the army and bore down upon the French columns. It was a terrible sight, capable of daunting the bravest troops, when this immense body of cavalry approached at full gallop the squares of infantry. The horsemen, admirably mounted, and magnificently dressed, rent the air with their cries. The glitter of spears and scimitars dazzled the sight, while the earth groaned under the repeated and increasing thunder of the horses' feet. The soldiers, impressed but not panic-struck by the sight, stood firm, and anxiously waited, with their pieces ready, the order to fire.¹

¹ Nap. ii.
236, 237.
Th. x. 117.
Sav. i. 57.

46.
Battle of the
Pyramids,
and defeat
of Mourad
Bey.

Desaix's division being entangled in a wood of palm-trees, was not completely formed when the swiftest of the Mamelukes came upon them; they were in consequence partially broken, and thirty or forty of the bravest of the assailants penetrated into, and died in the midst of the square at the feet of the officers. Before, however, the mass arrived, the movement was completed, and a rapid fire of musketry and grape drove them from the front round the sides of the column. With dauntless intrepidity they pierced through the interval between Desaix's and Reynier's divisions, and riding round both squares, strove to find an entrance; but an incessant fire from every front mowed them down as fast as they poured in at the open-

ing. Furious at the unexpected resistance, the Mussulman horsemen dashed their horses against the rampart of bayonets, and threw their pistols at the heads of the grenadiers; while many who had lost their steeds, crept along the ground, and cut at the legs of the front rank with their scimitars. In vain thousands succeeded, and galloped round the flaming walls of steel; multitudes perished under the rolling fire which, without intermission, issued from the ranks, and at length the survivors, in despair, fled towards the camp from whence they had issued. Here, however, they were charged in flank by Napoleon at the head of Dugua's division, while those of Vial and Bon, on the extreme left, stormed the intrenchments. The most horrible confusion now reigned in the camp; the horsemen, driven into its enclosure in disorder, trampled under foot the infantry, who, panic-struck at the rout of the cavalry, on whom all their hopes were placed, abandoned their ranks, and rushed in crowds towards the boats to escape to the other side of the Nile. Numbers saved themselves by swimming, but a great proportion perished in the attempt. The Mamelukes, rendered desperate, seeing no possibility of escape in that direction, fell upon the columns who were approaching from the right, with their wings extended in order of attack; but they, forming square again with inconceivable rapidity, repulsed them with great slaughter, and drove them finally off in the direction of the pyramids. The intrenched camp, with all its artillery, stores, and baggage, fell into the hands of the victors. Several thousands of the Mamelukes were drowned or killed; and of the formidable array which had appeared in such splendour in the morning, not more than two thousand five hundred escaped with Mourad Bey into Upper Egypt. The victors hardly lost two hundred men in the action; and several days were occupied after it was over in stripping the slain of their magnificent appointments, or fishing up the rich spoils which encumbered the Nile.¹

¹ Nap. ii.
237, 239.
241. Sav. i.
57. Th. x.
118, 121.
Lac. xiv.
268.

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47.
Ibrahim Bey
retires to
the frontiers
of Syria;
Mourad Bey
to Upper
Egypt.
Napoleon
enters
Cairo.

This action decided the fate of Egypt, by the destruction of force which it effected, and the dispersion of what remained which it occasioned. Mourad Bey retired to Upper Egypt, leaving Cairo to its fate; while Ibrahim Pasha, who had been a spectator of the combat from the opposite side of the river, set fire to the boats which contained his riches, and retreated to Salahieh, on the frontiers of Arabia, and from thence across the desert into Syria. Two days after the battle Napoleon entered Cairo, where his soldiers found all the luxuries of the East, which for a time compensated to them for their absence from Europe. The division of Desaix was destined to pursue Mourad Bey into Upper Egypt; the other divisions, dispersed in the environs of Cairo, or advanced towards Syria in pursuit of Ibrahim Pasha, tasted the sweets of repose after their short but fatiguing campaign. No sooner was Napoleon established in Cairo, and his officers employed in exploring the pyramids and city of tombs, which lay at their feet, than he set himself sedulously to follow up the plan for acquiring the dominion over the country to which his proclamations from Alexandria had originally pointed. He visited the principal Scheiks, flattered them, held out hopes of the speedy re-establishment of the Arabian power, promised ample security for their religion and their customs, and at length completely won their confidence, by a mixture of skilful management with the splendid language which was so well calculated to captivate eastern imaginations. The great object was to obtain from the Scheiks of the mosque of Jemilazar, which was held in the highest estimation, a declaration in favour of the French; and by adroitly flattering their ambition, this object was at length gained.¹

¹ Sav. i. 59.
Nap. ii. 246,
219.

A proclamation was issued by them, which announced the designs of Napoleon for gaining the affections of the Egyptians. "You are not ignorant," said the Scheiks, in this curious proclamation, which evidently bears the marks of the composition of Napoleon, "that the French alone, of

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48.

Pacific mea-
sures of Na-
poleon, and
proclama-
tions of the
Scheiks in
his favour.

all the European nations, have, in every age, been the firm friends of Mussulmans and Mahometism, and the enemies of idolators and their superstitions. They are the faithful and zealous allies of our sovereign the Sultaun, ever ready to give proofs of their affection, and to fly to his succour; they love those whom he loves, and hate those whom he hates; and that is the cause of their rupture with the Russians, those irreconcilable enemies of the worshippers of the true God, who meditate the capture of Constantinople, and incessantly employ alike violence and artifice to subjugate the faith of Mahomet. But the attachment of the French to the Sublime Porte, and the powerful succours which they are about to bring to him, will doubtless confound their impious designs. The Russians desire to get possession of St Sophia, and the other temples dedicated to the service of the true God, to convert them into churches consecrated to the exercises of their perverse faith; but, by the aid of Heaven, the French will enable the Sultaun to conquer their country, and exterminate their impious race."¹ A species of litany was composed by them, in which they celebrated the overthrow of their Mameluke oppressors by the invincible soldiers of the West. "The Beys," said they, "placed their confidence in their cavalry; they ranged their infantry in order of battle. But the Favourite of Fortune, at the head of the brave men of the West, has destroyed their horses, and confounded their hopes. As the vapours which rise in the morning from the Nile are dissipated by the rays of the sun, so has the army of the Mamelukes been dispersed by the heroes of the West; for the Great Allah is irritated against the Mamelukes, and the soldiers of Europe are the thunders of his right hand." The battle of the Pyramids struck terror far into Asia and Africa. The caravans which came to Mecca from the interior of those vast regions, carried back the most dazzling accounts of the victories of the invincible legions of Europe;² the destruction of the cavalry which had so long tyrannised over Egypt, excited the strongest sentiments

¹ Corresp.
Confid. de
Nap. v. 407.

² Scott, iv.
74. Th. x.
123, 127.
Dum. ii.
142.

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1798.

of wonder and admiration; and the orientals, whose imaginations were deeply impressed by the flaming citadels which had dissipated their terrible squadrons, named Napoleon, Sultaun Kebir, or the Sultaun of Fire.

49.
His able and impartial civil government. He affects the Mussulman faith.

Napoleon, in addition to the terror inspired by his military exploits, strove to acquire a lasting hold on the affections of the people by the justice and impartiality of his civil government. He made all his troops join with the multitude in celebrating the festival in honour of the inundation of the Nile, which that year rose to an extraordinary height; partook with the Scheiks and Imaums in the ceremonies at the Great Mosque; joined in the responses in their litanies like the faithful Mussulmans; and even balanced his body and moved his head in imitation of the Mahometan custom. Nor was it only by an affected regard for their religion that he endeavoured to confirm his civil authority. He permitted justice to be administered by the Scheiks and Imaums, enjoining only a scrupulous impartiality in their decisions; established at Cairo a divan or parliament, to make known the wants of the people; and others, in the different provinces, to send deputies to the Central Assembly; and vigorously repulsed the robbers of the desert, who for centuries had devastated with impunity the frontiers of the cultivated country. Never had Egypt experienced the benefits of regular government so completely as under his administration. One day, when Napoleon was surrounded by the Scheiks, information was received that some Arabs, of the tribe of Osnadis, had slain a Fellah, and carried off the flocks of the village. He instantly ordered that an officer of the staff should take three hundred horsemen, and two hundred camels, to pursue the robbers and punish the aggressors. "Was the Fellah your cousin," said a Scheik, laughing, "that you are in such a rage at his death?"—"He was more," replied Napoleon: "he was a man whose safety Providence had intrusted to my care."¹

¹ Th. x. 128.
Bour. ii. 124,
128. Dum.
ii. 170, 173.
Nap. ii. 222
Las Cas. i.
232.

"Wonderful!" replied the Scheik: "You speak like one inspired by the Almighty."

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50.

Growing
discontents
of the army.

But while these great designs occupied the commander-in-chief, an extraordinary degree of depression prevailed in the army. Egypt had been represented to the soldiers as the promised land. They expected to find a region flowing with milk and honey, and after a short period of glorious exile, to return with the riches of the East to their native country. A short experience was sufficient to dissipate all these illusions. They found a land illustrious only by the recollections with which it was fraught; filled with the monuments of ancient splendour, but totally destitute of modern comfort; with the pyramids raising their everlasting summits to heaven, but tyranny, poverty, barbarism overspreading the earth. When the excitements of the campaign were over, and the troops had leisure to contemplate their situation, a mortal feeling of *ennui* and disquietude took possession of every heart. "They thought," says Bourrienne, "of their country, of their relations, of their amours—what do I say?—of the opera." The prospect of being banished for ever from Europe, on that arid shore, excited the most gloomy presentiments: and at length the discontent reached such a height that Napoleon was obliged to threaten death to any officer, whatever his rank, who should venture to make known to him the feelings which every one entertained.¹

¹ Bour. ii.
130, 135.
Sav. i. 59,
60. Las Cas.
i. 222.

It is a singular proof of the ascendant which this great man had thus early acquired over the minds of the soldiers, that, when they were in this state of perilous fermentation, he ventured to proceed in person with the divisions commanded by Dugua and Reynier to extinguish an insurrection which Ibrahim had excited in the eastern part of Egypt, and drive him across the desert into Syria. The French overtook the Mamelukes at Salahieh, on the borders of the desert; and, as their rearguard was heavily laden with baggage, the Arabs who accompanied the cavalry strongly urged them to charge the retiring

51.
Expedition
to Salahieh
on the Syri-
an frontier.
Ibrahim Bey
retires into
Syria.

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columns, who were posted near a wood of palm-trees. The disproportion of force was excessive, the Mamelukes being nearly thrice as numerous as the Europeans; nevertheless Napoleon, confident of success, ordered the attack. But though the discipline of the Europeans prevailed over the desultory valour of the Mussulmans in a regular engagement, they had no such advantage in an affair of outposts; and on this occasion the skill and courage of the Mamelukes had wellnigh proved fatal to the best part of the French cavalry. The charge, though bravely led by Leclerc and Murat, was as courageously received, and in the peculiar manner which in every age has proved so formidable to European cavalry. The Mamelukes, as in the wars of the Crusades, yielded at first, but soon returning, with their wings extended, closed in on every side round their pursuers. In the *mêlée* all the French officers had to sustain desperate personal encounters, and were for the most part severely wounded; nothing but the opportune arrival of the infantry extricated them from their perilous situation, and probably total destruction.

¹ Sav. i. 63.
Bour. ii.
149, 150.

The object, however, of the expedition was gained; Ibrahim crossed the desert into Syria, leaving Mourad Bey alone to maintain the war in Upper Egypt.¹

52.
Intrigues of
Napoleon
with Ali
Pasha.

The success which had attended Napoleon's intrigues with the Knights of Malta induced him to extend his views beyond Egypt, for the dismembering of the Turkish empire. With this view he secretly despatched his aide-de-camp Lavalette to Ali Pasha, the most powerful of the European vassals of the Porte, to endeavour to stimulate him to revolt. He bore a letter from the French general, in which Napoleon urged him to enter into immediate concert for measures calculated to subvert the Ottoman empire.* Lavalette found that Ali Pasha was with the

* "The occasion appearing to me favourable, I have hastened to write to you a friendly letter, and have intrusted one of my aides-de-camp with its delivery with his own hands. I have charged him also to *make certain overtures on my part*; and, as he does not understand your language, be so kind as to make use of a faithful and confidential interpreter for the conversations which

army on the Danube ; but, nevertheless, he contrived means to have the letter conveyed to him. The crafty Greek, however, did not conceive the power of Napoleon in Egypt sufficiently confirmed to induce him to enter into the proposed alliance, and accordingly this attempt to shake the throne of the Grand Seignor failed of effect.¹

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¹ Hard. vi.
265, 269.
Lav. i. 358.

While secretly conducting these intrigues, as well as openly assailing one of the most valuable provinces of their empire, both Napoleon and the Directory left nothing untried to prolong the slumber of the Ottoman government, and induce them to believe that the French had no hostile designs whatever against them, and that they were in reality inimical only to the Beys, the common enemy of both. With this view, Napoleon wrote to the Grand Vizier a letter full of assurances of the friendly dispositions both of himself and his government, and the eternal alliance of the Republic with the Mussulmans ; * while Talleyrand, who had been appointed ambassador at Constantinople, received instructions to exert himself to the very utmost to perpetuate the same perfidious illusion. Such was the ability of that able diplomatist, and Ruffin, the envoy at the Turkish capital,

53.
Treachery
of France
towards
Turkey.

he will have with you. I pray you to give implicit faith to whatever he may say to you on my part ; and to send him back quickly with an answer, written in Turkish with your own hand."—*Corresp. Confid. de Nap.* v. 249. Lavalette's instructions from Napoleon were to tell Ali, "that, after having taken possession of Malta, and ruling in the Mediterranean with thirty ships of the line and fifty thousand men, I wish to establish confidential relations with him, and to know if I can rely on his co-operation."—*LAVALLETTE*, i. 358.

* Napoleon's letter was in these terms :—"The French army, which I have the honour to command, has entered Egypt, to punish the Beys for the insults they have committed on the French commerce. Citizen Talleyrand-Périgord, minister of foreign affairs in France, has been named, on the part of France, ambassador at Constantinople, and he is furnished with full powers to negotiate and sign the requisite treaties, to remove any difficulties that may arise from the occupation of Egypt by the French army, and to consolidate the ancient and necessary friendship that ought to exist between the two powers. But as he may possibly not yet have arrived at Constantinople, I lose no time in making known to your Excellency the resolution of the French government, not only to remain on terms of *its ancient friendship with the Ottoman Porte*, but to procure for it a barrier of which it stands so much in need against its natural enemies, who are at this moment leaguering together for its destruction."—*Despatch*, 22d August 1798 ; *Corresp. Confid. de Nap.* vi. 3, 4.

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that for long the Divan shut their eyes to the obvious indications which were afforded of the real designs of France. Proportionally great was the general indignation when accounts arrived of the invasion of Egypt, and it became evident how completely they had been deceived by these perfidious representations. Preparations for war were made with the utmost activity. The French chargé-d'affaires, Ruffin, was sent to the Seven Towers; and the indignation of the Divan broke forth in one of those eloquent manifestoes, which a sense of perfidious injury seldom fails to produce among the honest, though illiterate, rulers of mankind.¹ *

¹ Hard. vi.
278, 280.

54.
Naval operations.
Movements
of Nelson.
He arrives
at Alexandria.

But while everything was thus prospering on land, a desperate reverse awaited Napoleon at sea, brought about by the genius of that illustrious man who seemed to have been the instrument of Providence to balance the destiny of nations, turn from Asiatic wilds to European revolution the chains of military power, and preserve safe, amidst the western waves, the destined ark of European freedom. After having sought in vain for the French fleet on the coast of Egypt, Nelson returned to Candia, and from thence to Syracuse, where he obtained, with extraordinary rapidity, the supplies of which he stood so much in need. The failure of his pursuit was owing to a

Turkish declaration of war.

* The manifesto of Turkey, which was a most able state-paper, bears, "On the one hand, the French ambassadors, resident at Constantinople, making use of the same dissimulation and treachery which they have everywhere practised, gave to the Turkish government the strongest assurances of friendship, and sought by every art of dissimulation to blind it to their real designs, and induce it to come to a rupture with other and friendly powers; while, on the other, the commanders and generals of the French troops in Italy, with the perfidious design of corrupting the subjects of his highness, have never ceased to send into Roumelia, the Morea, and the islands of the Archipelago, emissaries known for their perfidy and dissimulation, and to spread everywhere incendiary publications, tending to excite the inhabitants to revolt. And now, as if to demonstrate to the world that France makes no distinction between its friends and its enemies, it has, in the midst of a profound peace with Turkey, and while still professing to the Porte the same sentiments of friendship, invaded, without either provocation, complaint, or declaration of war, but after the usage of pirates, Egypt, one of the most valuable provinces of the Ottoman empire, from which, to this hour, it has received only marks of friendship."—See the *Manifesto in* HARDENBERG, vi. 483, 493, dated 10th Sept. 1798.

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singular cause. Nelson had set sail from Sicily on the 21st June, and the French fleet on the 18th; nevertheless, so much more rapidly did his fleet move than his antagonist's that he passed them on the voyage, and arrived at Alexandria on the 28th, two days before the French squadron. He set sail immediately for Candia, upon not finding them there; and thus, through his activity and zeal, *twice* missed the fleet of which he was in search. But the time was now approaching when his wishes were to be realised. He departed from Syracuse for the Morea on the 25th of July, and, having received intelligence in Greece that the French fleet had been seen four weeks before, steering to the south-east from Candia, he determined to return to Alexandria. On the 1st ^{1st Aug.} August, about ten in the morning, his fleet came in sight of the Pharos; the port had been vacant and solitary when they last saw it, now it was crowded with ships, and they perceived, with exultation, that the tricolor flag was flying on the walls. The fleet of Bruéys was seen lying at anchor in the bay of ABOUKIR. The utmost joy animated the whole sailors on board the fleet at the sight, and Nelson and his officers now felt confident of the success which they had so long hoped for. During the chase he had repeatedly had his captains on board his ship, and explained his plan of attack so completely that they were as much masters of, and prepared to execute it, as himself. For many days before, the anxiety of Nelson had been such that he neither ate nor slept. He now ordered dinner to be prepared, and appeared in the highest spirits. "Before this time to-morrow," said he to his officers, when leaving him to take the command of their vessels, "I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey."¹

Admiral Bruéys having been detained, by Napoleon's orders, at the mouth of the Nile, and being unable to get into the harbour of Alexandria, had drawn up his fleet in order of battle, in a position in the bay of Aboukir so

Dum. ii.
128. South.
ii. 218, 221.
Berry's
Narrative,
Nelson
Desp. ii.
49, 55.

55.
Bruéys'
position.

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strong that, in the opinion of his best officers, the English would never venture to attack it. The headmost vessel was close to the shoal on the north-west, and the rest of the fleet formed a sort of curve, with its convex side towards the sea, and supported on the right by the batteries on the fort of Aboukir. In this way their broadsides were prepared to pour a concentric fire from all the ships, should the English approach with the dreaded intention of breaking the line. Bruéys had done his utmost to get his ships into the harbour of Alexandria; but, finding that the draught of water was too small for the larger vessels, he wisely determined not to adopt a measure which, by dividing his fleet, would have exposed it to certain destruction. After Napoleon was fairly established in Egypt, by the capture of Cairo, he sent orders to the admiral to go to Corfu, if he could not get the ships into the harbour of Alexandria; but till that event took place, he was in too precarious a situation to deprive himself of the assistance of his fleet; and it was then too late to escape the danger, as the English were within sight of the ramparts of Alexandria.¹

¹ On 30th July. See the letter in Bourrienne, ii. 329; and Cor. Conf. v. 332. Bour. ii. 155, 318, 327, 333, 335.

56.
Nelson's plan of attack, and forces on both sides.

No sooner did Nelson perceive the situation of the French fleet, than he resolved to penetrate between them and the shore, and in that way double with his whole force on part of that of the enemy. "Where there is room for the enemy to swing," said he, "there must be room for us to anchor." His plan was to place his fleet half on the outer, and half on the inner side of the French line, and station his ships, as far as practicable, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter of each of the enemy's. Captain Berry, his flag-captain, when he was made acquainted with the design, exclaimed with transport, "If we succeed, what will the world say?"—"There is no 'If' in the case," replied Nelson; "that we shall succeed is certain; who may live to tell the story is a very different question."² The number of ships of the line on the two sides was equal, but the French had

² Vict. et Cong. ix. 90, 91. South. ii. 222, 224. Journ. xi. 416, 417. Ann. Reg. 140. James, ii. 232. Nelson's Despatch. iii. 54.

a great advantage in the size of their vessels; their ships carrying 1196 guns, and 11,230 men, while the English had only 1012 guns, and 8068 men. The British squadron consisted entirely of seventy-fours; whereas the French, besides the noble l'Orient, of 120 guns, had two 80-gun ships, the Franklin and Guillaume Tell.* The battery on Aboukir fort was mounted with four pieces of heavy cannon and two mortars, besides pieces of lighter calibre.

The squadron advanced to the attack at half-past six in the afternoon. Every ship bore the red cross of St George and union-jack. After dark, each British ship had four horizontal lights at the mizen-peak. Admiral Bruéys at first imagined that the battle would be deferred till the following morning; but the gallant bearing and steady course of the British ships, as they entered the bay, soon convinced him that an immediate assault was intended. The moment was felt by the bravest in both fleets: thousands gazed in silence, and with anxious hearts, on each other, who were never destined again to see the sun; and the shore was covered with multitudes of Arabs,

57.
Battle of
the Nile.

Aug. 1.

* The comparative strength of the two fleets was as follows:—

BRITISH.			FRENCH.		
Ships.	Guns.	Men.	Ships.	Guns.	Men.
Vanguard	74	595	L'Orient	120	1010
Orion	74	590	Le Franklin	80	800
Culloden	74	590	Le Tonnant	80	800
Bellerophon	74	590	Le Guillaume Tell	80	800
Defence	74	590	Le Généreux	74	700
Minotaur	74	640	Le Guerrier	74	700
Alexander	74	590	Le Conquérant	74	700
Audacious	74	590	Le Spartiate	74	700
Zealous	74	590	Le Timoléon	74	700
Swiftsure	74	590	Le Peuple Souverain	74	700
Majestic	74	590	L'Heureux	74	700
Goliath	74	591	Le Mercure	74	700
Theseus	74	590	L'Aquilon	74	700
Leander	50	343	L'Artémise	36	300
			La Sérieuse	36	300
			L'Hercule, bomb	—	50
			La Fortune	18	70
			La Justice	40	400
			La Diane	40	400
	1012	8068		1196	11,230

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anxious to behold a fight on which, to all appearance, the fate of their country would depend. When the British fleet came within range, they were received with a steady fire from the broadsides of all the vessels and the batteries on the island. It fell right, and with terrible severity, on the bows of the leading ships; but, without returning a shot, they bore directly down upon the enemy. Captain Foley led the way in the *Goliath*, outsailing the *Zealous*, under Captain Hood, which for some time disputed the post of honour with him; and when he reached the van of the enemy's line, he steered between the outermost ship and the shoal, so as to interpose between the French fleet and the shore. In ten minutes he shot away the masts of the *Conquérant*; while the *Zealous*, which immediately followed, in the same time totally disabled the *Guerrier*. The other ships in that column, viz., the *Orion*, *Audacious*, and *Theseus*, followed in their order, still inside the French line; while Nelson in the *Van-guard*, at the head of six ships, viz., the *Minotaur*, *Defiance*, *Bellerophon*, *Majestic*, *Swiftsure*, and *Alexander*, passed along the French line on the outside, and cast anchor each by the stern opposite to their respective opponents. Nelson himself anchored outside of the enemy, within pistol-shot of their third ship, the *Spartiate*. The effect of this manœuvre was to bring an overwhelming force against two-thirds of the enemy's squadron, while the other third, moored at a distance from the scene of danger, could neither aid their friends nor injure their enemies.¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. ix. 91.
South, i.
228, 229.
James, ii.
238, 239.
Ann. Reg.
143. Dum.
ii. 149. Jom.
xi. 11, 17.
Nelson
Desp. iii.
51.

58.
Commence-
ment of the
action.

In taking up their respective positions, the British vessels had a terrible fire to sustain from the French line, which they passed within pistol-shot; for the Republicans stood to their guns with great firmness, and fired with equal precision and deliberation. Not a shot was returned from the British ships till they were all anchored, the men being aloft furling the sails, or on deck hauling the braces. When the ships, however, had all taken their

places, the advantage gained was apparent. Nelson had arranged his fleet with such skill that, from the moment that the ships took up their positions, the victory was secure. Five ships had passed the line, and anchored between the first nine of the enemy and the shore, while six had taken their station on the outer side of the same vessels, which were thus placed between two fires, and had no possibility of escape. Another vessel, the *Leander*, was interposed across the line, and cut off the vanguard from all assistance from the rearmost ships of the squadron, while her guns raked right and left those between which she was placed. The *Culloden*, which came up sounding after it was dark, ran aground two leagues from the hostile fleets, and, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of her captain and crew, could take no part in the action which followed; but her fate served as a warning to the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure*, which would else have infallibly struck on the shoal and perished. The way in which these ships, under the brave Captain Hallowell's direction, entered the bay, and took up their stations amidst the gloom of night, by the light of the increasing cannonade, excited the admiration of all who witnessed it.¹

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¹ Dum. ii.
150. South.
i. 231. Ann.
Reg. 145.
Vict. et
Cong. ix.
92. Nelson
Desp. iii.
51.

The British ships, however, had a severe fire to sustain as they successively passed along the enemy's line to take up their appointed stations; and the great size of several of the French squadron rendered them more than a match for any single vessel the British could oppose to them. The *Vanguard*, which bore proudly down, bearing the admiral's flag, and six colours on different parts of the rigging, had every man at the first six guns on the fore-castle killed or wounded in a few minutes, and they were three times swept off before the action closed. Such, however, was the vigour of the fire which they opened, when their broadsides were delivered, that in ten minutes the *Guerrier* was dismasted, and in ten more the *Conquérant* and *Spartiate* were equally disabled, and struck their colours. The *Spartiate* surrendered first, and the

59.
Its dreadful
nature.

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sword of her captain was brought to Nelson on his quarter-deck. Shortly after, the Aquilon and the Peuple Souverain hauled down their colours, and were taken possession of; and the Heureux and Tonnant were so disabled that their capture was considered certain. The Bellerophon dropped her stern-anchor close under the bows of the Orient, and, notwithstanding the immense disproportion of force, continued to engage her first-rate antagonist till her own masts had all gone overboard, and almost every officer was either killed or wounded, when she drifted away with the tide, overwhelmed, but not subdued—a glorious monument of unconquerable valour. As she floated along, she came close to the Swiftsure, which was coming into action, and not having the lights at the mizen-peak, which Nelson had ordered as a signal by which his own ships might distinguish each other, she was at first mistaken for an enemy. Fortunately Captain Hallowell, who commanded that vessel, had the presence of mind to order his men not to fire, till he ascertained whether the hulk was a friend or an enemy, and thus a catastrophe was prevented which might have proved fatal to one or both of these ships. The station of the Bellerophon in combating the Orient was now taken by the Swiftsure, which opened at once a steady fire on the quarter of the Franklin and the bows of the French admiral; while the Alexander anchored on his larboard quarter, and, with the Leander, completed the destruction of their gigantic opponent.¹

It was now dark, but both fleets were illuminated by the incessant discharge of above two thousand pieces of cannon, and the volumes of flame and smoke that rolled away from the bay gave it the appearance as if a terrific volcano had suddenly burst forth in the midst of the sea. Victory, however, had already decisively declared for the British: before nine, three ships of the line had struck, and two were dismasted; and the flames were seen bursting forth from the Orient, as she still continued, with unabated energy, her heroic defence. They spread with

¹ South, i.
230, 232.
Ann. Reg.
145. James,
ii. 240, 248.
Jom. xi. 417,
418. Nelson
Desp. iii. 50,
51. Vict. et
Cong. ix.
92, 93.

60.
The
Orient
blows up.

frightful rapidity: the fire of the *Swiftsure* was directed with such fatal precision to the burning part, that all attempts to extinguish it proved ineffectual; and the masts and rigging were soon wrapped in flames, which threw a prodigious light over the heavens, and rendered the situation of every ship in both fleets distinctly visible. The sight redoubled the ardour of the British seamen, by exhibiting the shattered condition and lowered colours of so many of their enemies, and loud cheers from the whole fleet announced every successive flag that was struck. As the fire approached the magazine of the *Orient*, many officers and men jumped overboard, and were picked up by the British boats; others were dragged into the port-holes of the nearest British ships, who for that purpose suspended their firing; but the greater part of the crew, with heroic bravery, stood to their guns to the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. At ten o'clock she blew up, with an explosion so tremendous that nothing in ancient or modern war was equal to it. Every ship in the hostile fleets was shaken to its centre; the firing, by universal consent, ceased on both sides, and the tremendous explosion was followed by a silence still more awful, interrupted only, after the lapse of some minutes, by the splash of the shattered masts and yards falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been thrown. The British ships in the vicinity, with admirable coolness, had made preparations to avoid the conflagration: all the shrouds and sails were thoroughly wetted, and sailors stationed with buckets of water to extinguish any burning fragments which might fall upon their decks. By these means, although large burning masses fell on the *Swiftsure* and *Alexander*, they were extinguished without doing any serious damage.¹

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¹ South. i.
236, 238.
James, ii.
246, 249.
Ann. Reg.
146. Miot,
Exped. en
Egypte, 212,
217. Gan-
theaume's
Report, Cor.
Conf. v. 436,
441. Nelson
Desp. iii.
51, 52. Vict.
et Conq. ix.
94, 99.

After a pause of ten minutes, the firing recommenced, and continued without intermission till after midnight, when it gradually grew slacker, from the shattered condition of the French ships and the exhaustion of the British

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61.

Glorious
victory in
which the
action ter-
minates.

¹ James, ii.
249, 251.
South. i.
238, 240.
Ann. Reg.
146, 147.
Nelson
Desp. iii.
52. Vict.
et Cong. ix.
96, 102.

62.

Wound of
Nelson.

sailors, numbers of whom fell asleep beside their guns, the instant a momentary cessation of loading took place. At daybreak the magnitude of the victory was apparent; not a vestige of the Orient was to be seen; the frigate the *Sérieuse* was sunk; the *Artémise* frigate, after having hauled down her flag, had been fired by her own crew, who partly escaped on shore, and she burned to the water's edge; and the whole French line, with the exception of the *Guillaume Tell* and *Généreux*, had struck their colours. These ships, having been little engaged in the action, cut their cables, and stood out to sea, followed by the two frigates: they were gallantly pursued by the *Zealous*, which was rapidly gaining on them; but as there was no other ship of the line in a condition to support her, she was recalled, and these ships escaped. Had the *Culloden* not struck on the shoal, and the frigates belonging to the squadron been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have escaped to convey the mournful tidings to France.¹

Early in the battle, the British admiral received a severe wound on the head, from a piece of langridge shot. Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. Nelson, and all around him, thought, from the great effusion of blood, that the wound was mortal. His first words addressed to Captain Berry were—"I am killed: remember me to my wife." When he was carried to the cockpit, the surgeon quitted the seamen whose wounds he was dressing, to attend to the admiral. "No," said Nelson; "I will take my turn with my brave fellows." Nor would he suffer himself to be examined till every man, who had previously been brought down, was properly attended to. Fully believing that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in the moment of victory, he called for the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he conceived to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson; and, seizing a pen, contrived to write a few words, marking his devout sense of the success which had already

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been obtained. When the surgeon came in due time, after having visited the others, to inspect the wound—for no entreaties could prevail on him to let it be examined sooner—the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men, and of the whole crew, when they found the injury was only superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. When the cry rose that the Orient was on fire, he contrived to make his way, aided by Captain Berry, to the quarterdeck, where he instantly gave orders that boats should be despatched to the relief of the enemy.¹

¹ South. i.
234, 235.
236. Clarke
and M^r Ar-
thur, ii. 89.
Nelson,
Desp. iii.
56.

Nor were heroic deeds confined to the British squadron. Most of the captains of the French fleet were killed or wounded, and they all fought with the enthusiastic courage which is characteristic of their nation. The captain of the Tonnant, Dupetit-Thouars, when both his legs were carried away by a cannon-ball, refused to quit the quarterdeck, and made his crew swear not to strike their colours as long as they had a man capable of standing to their guns. Admiral Bruëys, a little after eight, was struck by a cannon-ball in the middle, which nearly cut him in two. His assistants approached to carry him below; but he refused, saying, "A French admiral should die on his quarterdeck." In a quarter of an hour after, he died the death of the brave, still on his quarterdeck, exhorting his men to continue the combat to the last extremity.* Casa-

63.
Heroic
deeds in the
French
squadron.

* Napoleon addressed the following noble letter to Madame Bruëys on her husband's death:—"Your husband has been killed by a cannon-ball while combating on his quarterdeck. He died without suffering; the death the most easy and the most to be envied by the brave. I feel warmly for your grief. The moment which separates us from the object which we love is terrible; we feel isolated on the earth; we almost experience the convulsions of the last agony; the faculties of the soul are annihilated; its connexion with the earth is preserved only across a veil which distorts everything. We feel in such a situation that there is nothing which yet binds us to life—that it were far better to die: but when, after such first and unavoidable throes, we press our children to our hearts, tears and more tender sentiments arise; life becomes endurable for their sakes. Yes, madam, they will open the fountains of your heart; you will watch their childhood, educate their youth; you will speak to them of their father, of your present grief, and of the loss which they and the

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¹ Dum. ii.
151, 152.
James, ii.
236, 237.
Vict. et
Conq. ix.
96.

64.
Great re-
sults of the
victory.

Bianca, captain of the *Orient*, fell mortally wounded, when the flames were devouring that splendid vessel; his son, a boy of ten years of age, was combating beside him when he was struck, and, embracing his father, resolutely refused to quit the ship, though a gunboat had come alongside to bring him off. He contrived to bind his dying parent to the mast, which had fallen into the sea, and floated off with the precious charge: he was seen after the explosion by some of the British squadron, who made the utmost efforts to save his life; but, in the agitation of the waves following that dreadful event, both were swallowed up and seen no more.^{1*}

Such was the battle of the Nile, for which he who gained it felt that victory was too feeble a word; he called it conquest. Of thirteen ships of the line, nine were taken and two burnt; of four frigates, one was sunk and one burnt. The British loss was eight hundred and ninety-five in killed and wounded; they had to lament the death of

Republic have sustained in his death. After having resumed the interest in life by the chord of maternal love, you will perhaps feel some consolation from the friendship and warm interest which I shall ever take in the widow of my friend."—*Corresp. Confid.* v. 383.

* This moving incident is thus beautifully treated by one of the greatest of modern lyric poets.

"The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him on the dead.
Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though child-like form.
The flames roll'd on—he would not go
Without his father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.
'Speak, father!' once again he cried,
'If I may yet be gone!'
And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames roll'd on.
Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair;
And look'd from that lone post of death
In still yet brave despair.
And shouted but once more aloud,
'My father! must I stay?'

only one commander, Captain Westcott, a brave and able officer. Of the French, five thousand two hundred and twenty-five were killed, wounded, or taken, and three thousand one hundred and five besides were sent on shore, in great part wounded, with all their effects, on their parole not to serve again till regularly exchanged,*—an act of humanity which was ill requited by Napoleon, who incorporated the whole who were capable of bearing arms into different regiments of his army.† The annals of the world do not afford an example of so complete an overthrow of so great an armament. The Arabs and Egyptians lined the shore during this terrible engagement, and beheld with mingled terror and astonishment the destruction which the Europeans were inflicting on each other. The beach, for an extent of four leagues, was covered with wreck, and innumerable bodies were seen floating in the bay, in spite of the utmost exertions of both fleets to sink them.¹ No sooner, however, was the conquest completed, than a per-

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¹ James, ii.
254, 255.
South. i.
240. Dum.
ii. 152, 153.
James, ii.
265. Sav. i.
65. South.
i. 241. Nelson
Desp.
iii. 53.

While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And stream'd above the gallant child
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder-sound—
The boy—oh! where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strew the sea!"

HEMANS.

* "Total crews, per certificates of officers, on board ships burned and taken	8930
Sent ashore on cartel	3105
Escaped from Timoléon	350
From the Hercule, bomb	50
Officers, &c. on board fleet	200
	3705
Taken, drowned, and missing	5225
HORATIO NELSON."	

—See *Nelson Despatches*, iii. 55.

† "The English," says Kleber, "have had the disinterestedness to restore everything to their prisoners; they would not permit an *iota* to be taken from them. The consequence is, that they display in Alexandria a luxury and elegance which exhibit a strange contrast to the destitute condition of the land forces."—*Despatch to Napoleon*, 22d Aug. 1798; BOURRIENNE, ii. 160. The wounded French sent ashore are stated by Admiral

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fect stillness pervaded the whole squadron; it was the moment of the thanksgiving which, by orders of Nelson, was offered up through all the fleet, for the signal success which the Almighty had vouchsafed to the British arms. The French prisoners remarked that it was no wonder such order was preserved in the English navy, when at such an hour, and after such a victory, their minds could be impressed with such sentiments.*

65.
Honours
bestowed on
Nelson.

Had Nelson possessed a few frigates or bomb-vessels, the whole transports and small craft in the harbour of Alexandria might have been destroyed in a few hours. So severely did he feel the want of them at this period that, in a despatch to the Admiralty, he declared, "Were I to die at this moment, *want of frigates* would be found engraven on my heart!" The want of such light vessels, however, rendered any attack on the shipping in the shoal water of Alexandria perfectly impossible; and it was not without the utmost exertions, and the united co-operation of all the officers and men, that the fleet was refitted so far as to be able to proceed to sea. Having at length, however, overcome every obstacle, and despatched an overland messenger to Bombay, to acquaint the government there with his success, he set sail from Aboukir Bay on the 18th August, leaving three ships of the line to blockade the harbour of Alexandria. Three of the prizes, being perfect wrecks, were burned; the remaining six arrived in safety at Gibraltar. Honours and rewards were showered by a grateful nation upon the heroes of the Nile. Nelson was created Baron Nelson of the Nile, with a pension of £2000 a-year to himself and his two immediate succes-

Gantheaume, in his official report, to have amounted to nearly eight thousand—an astonishing number, if correct, considering that the whole French crews in the action did not exceed twelve thousand.—*See Gantheaume's Report; Corresp. Confid. de Napoleon*, v. 483.

* Nelson's order was as follows:—

"Vanguard, off the mouth of the Nile, 2d Aug. 1798.

"Almighty God having blessed his Majesty's arms with victory, the Admiral intends returning public thanksgiving for the same, at two o'clock this day; and he recommends every ship doing the same, as soon as convenient. HORATIO NELSON."—*Nelson Despatches*, iii. 61.

sors; the Grand Seigneur, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Sardinia, the King of Naples, the East India Company, made him magnificent presents; and his name was embalmed for ever in the recollection of his grateful country. With truth did Mr Pitt observe in parliament, when reproached for not conferring on him a higher dignity, "Admiral Nelson's fame will be coequal with the British name, and it will be remembered that he gained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man will think of asking whether he had been created a baron, a viscount, or an earl."*¹

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiii. p.
1560. South.
i. 249, 255,
257. James,
ii. 266, 267.

The battle of the Nile was a mortal stroke to Napoleon and the French army. He was too clear-sighted not to perceive the fatal and irremediable nature of the loss there incurred. It had been his design, after the conquest of Egypt was secured, to embark a great proportion of his forces, return to Toulon, and employ them on some other and still greater expedition against the power of England. By this irreparable loss he found these prospects for ever blasted; the army exiled, without hope of return, on an

66.
Disastrous
effects of
this blow to
the French
army.

* Napoleon, who never failed to lay every misfortune with which he was connected upon destiny, or the faults of others, rather than his own errors, has laboured to exculpate himself with regard to the disaster in Aboukir Bay, and declared, in his official despatch to the Directory, that on July 6, before leaving Alexandria, he wrote to Admiral Bruëys, directing him to retire within the harbour of that town, or, if that was impossible, to make the best of his way to Corfu,² and that the catastrophe arose from his disobedience. It is true he sent an order, but it was *conditional*, and as follows: — "Admiral Bruëys will cause the fleet, in the course of to-morrow, to enter the old harbour of Alexandria, if the time permits, and there is sufficient depth of water. If there is not in the harbour sufficient draught, he will take such measures that, during the course of to-morrow, he may have disembarked the artillery and stores, and the individuals belonging to the army, retaining only a hundred soldiers in each ship of the line, and forty in each frigate. The admiral, in the course of to-morrow, will let the general know whether the squadron can get into Alexandria, or can defend itself, while lying in the roads of Aboukir, against a superior enemy; and if it can do neither of these things, it will make the best of its way to Corfu, leaving at Alexandria only the Dubois and Causse, with the Diane, Juno, Alcestis, and Artémise frigates."³ The order to proceed to Corfu, therefore, was *conditional*—to take effect only on failure to get into Alexandria, or to find a defensible roadstead; and, from the following letters, it appears that Bruëys, with the full knowledge of the general-in-chief, proceeded to adopt the prior alternative of taking up a defensive position at Aboukir. The day before, Bruëys had written to Napoleon: "All the accounts

² Nap. ii. 170.

³ Letter,
3d July.

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¹ Th. x. 138,
139. Miot,
79. Bour.
ii. 133, 135.

inhospitable shore, all means of preserving his recent conquest frustrated, and himself destined, to all appearance, instead of changing the face of the world, to maintain an inglorious and hopeless struggle in a corner of the Turkish empire. All his dreams of European conquests and oriental revolution appeared at once to vanish, by the destruction of the resources by means of which they were to be realised; and nothing remained but the painful certainty that he had doomed to a lingering fate the finest army of the Republic, and endangered its independence by the sacrifice of so large a portion of its defenders. But, though in secret overwhelmed by the disaster, he maintained in public the appearance of equanimity, and suffered nothing to escape his lips which could add to the discouragement of his soldiers. "Well," said he, "we must remain here, or issue from it as great as the ancients." "Yes," replied Kleber, "we must do great things: I am preparing my mind to go through them."¹

But while the chiefs of the army thus endeavoured to conceal the gloomy presentiments which overwhelmed

I have hitherto received are unsatisfactory *as to the possibility of getting into the harbour*, as the bar has only twenty-two feet six inches, which our smallest seventy-fours draw, so that entry is impossible. My present position is untenable, by reason of the rocks with which the bottom of the bay is strewed; and if attacked, I should be infallibly destroyed by the enemy, if I had the misfortune to await them in this place. The only thing that I see practicable is, *to take shelter in the moorings of Beckier* (Aboukir,) where the bottom is good, and I could take such a position as would render me secure from the enemy."² On the 6th July, Bruéys wrote to Napoleon, in addition to his letter of the 2d, "I have neglected nothing which might permit the ships of the line to get into the old port; but it is a labour which requires much time and patience. The loss of a single vessel is too considerable to allow anything to be left to chance: and hitherto it appears that we cannot attempt such a measure without incurring the greatest dangers: that is the opinion of all the most experienced officers on board the fleet. Admiral Villeneuve and Casa-Bianca regard it as impossible. When I have sounded the roadstead of Beckier, I will send you a report with regard to it. Want of provisions is severely felt in the fleet; on board many vessels there is only biscuit for fourteen days." On the 7th July he again wrote to Napoleon, "I thank you for the precaution you have taken *in sending engineer and artillery officers to meet me in the Bay of Beckier*. I shall concert measures with them as soon as we are moored, and if I am fortunate enough to discover a position where batteries on shore may protect the two extremities of my line, I shall regard the position as impregnable, at least during summer and autumn. It is the more desirable to remain there, because I can set sail *en masse* when I think fit; whereas, even if I could get into the

² Letter, 2d
July.

7th July.

their minds, the inferior officers and soldiers gave unrestrained vent to the despair with which they were filled. Already, before they reached Cairo, the illusion of the expedition had been dispelled; the expected riches of the East had given place to poverty and suffering; the promised land had turned out an arid wilderness. But when intelligence arrived of the destruction of the fleet, and with it of all hope of returning to Europe, except as prisoners of war, they gave vent to such loud complaints that it required all the firmness of the generals to prevent a mutiny breaking out. Many soldiers, in despair, blew out their brains; others threw themselves into the Nile, and perished, with their arms and baggage. When the generals passed by, the cry, "There go the murderers of the French!" involuntarily burst from the ranks. By degrees, however, this stunning misfortune, like every other disaster in life, was softened by time. The soldiers, deprived of the possibility of returning, ceased to disquiet themselves about it,¹ and ultimately they resigned themselves with much greater composure to a continued resi-

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67.

Despair of
the inferior
officers and
soldiers.¹ Bour. ii.
134, 138.
Sav. i. 65.

harbour of Alexandria, I might be blockaded by a single vessel of the enemy, and should be unable to contribute anything to your glory." On the 13th July, he again wrote to Napoleon, "I am fortifying my position, in case of being obliged to combat at anchor. I have demanded two mortars from Alexandria to put on the sand-bank; but I am less apprehensive of that than the other extremity of the line, against which the principal efforts of the enemy will in all probability be directed." And on the 26th July, he wrote again, "The officers whom I have charged with the sounding of the port, have at length announced that their labours are concluded; I shall forthwith transmit the plan, when I have received it, that *you may decide what vessels are to enter.*" On the 30th, Napoleon wrote in answer, "I have received all your letters. The intelligence which I have received of the soundings, induces me to believe that you are by this time safely in the port;"² and ordered him forthwith to do so, or proceed to Corfu. On the day after this last letter was written, Nelson's fleet attacked Bruéys in the Bay of Aboukir. Napoleon, therefore, was perfectly aware that the fleet was lying in Aboukir Bay; and it was evidently retained there by his orders, or with his approbation, as a support to the army, or a means of retreat in case of disaster. In truth, such was the penury of the country, that the fleet could not lay in provisions at Alexandria to enable it to stand out to sea.³ He was too able a man, besides, to hazard such an army without any means of retreat in an unknown country: and Bourienne declares that, previous to the taking of Cairo, he often talked with him on re-embarking the army, and laughed himself at the false colours in which he had represented the matter to the Directory.⁴ It is proved, by indisputable evidence, that the fleet was detained by the orders, or with the concurrence of Napoleon. "It

13th July.

26th July.

30th July.

² Corresp.
Conf. v. 192.
194, 200, 201,
222, 237, 266,
332, 404.³ Bour. ii. 144.⁴ Bour. ii. 144.
155, 315, 336.

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68.

It at once
brings on a
war between
France and
Turkey.

dence in Egypt, than they could have done had the fleet remained to keep alive for ever in their breasts the desire of returning to their native country.

The consequences of the battle of the Nile were, to the last degree, disastrous to France. Its effects in Europe were immense, by reviving, as will be detailed hereafter, the coalition against the Republican government; and in the East, it at once brought on the Egyptian army the whole weight of the Ottoman empire. The French ambassador at Constantinople had found great difficulty for long in restraining the indignation of the Sulthan; the good sense of the Turks could not easily be persuaded that it was an act of friendship to the Porte to invade one of the most important provinces of the empire, destroy its militia, and subject its inhabitants to the dominion of a European power. No sooner, therefore, was the Divan at liberty to speak its real sentiments, by the destruction of the armament which had so long spread terror through the Levant, than they gave vent to their indignation. War was formally declared against France; the differ-

30th Sept.

may perhaps be said," says Admiral Gantheaume, the second in command, who survived the defeat, "that it would have been more prudent to have quitted the coast after the debarkation was effected; but, *considering the orders of the commander-in-chief*, and the incalculable support which the fleet gave to the land forces, the admiral conceived it to be his duty not to abandon those seas."¹ Bruëys also said to Lavalette, in Aboukir Bay, on the 21st July, "Since I could not get into the old harbour of Alexandria, nor retire from the coast of Egypt, without news from the army, I have established myself here in as strong a position as I could."² The inference to be drawn from these documents is, that neither Napoleon nor Bruëys was to blame for the disaster which happened in Aboukir Bay; that the former ordered the fleet to enter Alexandria or to take a defensible position, and if the admiral could do *neither*, then he was to proceed to Corfu; but that the latter was unable, from the limited draught of water at the bar, to do the first, and, agreeably to his orders, attempted the second; that the fleet lay at Aboukir Bay, with the full knowledge of the general-in-chief, and without his being able to prevent it, though his penetration in the outset perceived the danger to which it was exposed in so doing; and that the only real culpability in the case belongs to Napoleon, in having endeavoured, after Bruëys' death, to blacken his character, by representing the disaster to the Directory as exclusively imputable to that officer, and as having arisen from his disobedience of orders, when, in fact, it arose from extraneous circumstances, over which the admiral had no control, having rendered it necessary for him to adopt the second alternative prescribed to him by his commander.

¹ Harl. vi. 89.² Lav. i. 274.

ences with Russia were adjusted; and the formation of an army was immediately decreed to restore the authority of the Crescent on the banks of the Nile. Among the many wonders of this eventful period, not the least surprising was the alliance which the French invasion of Egypt produced between Turkey and Russia, and the suspension of all the ancient animosity between the Christians and the Mussulmans, under the pressure of a danger common to both. This soon led to an event so extraordinary, that it produced a profound impression even on the minds of the Mussulman spectators.¹

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On the 1st September, a Russian fleet of ten ships of the line and eight frigates entered the Bosphorus, and united at the Golden Horn with the Turkish squadron; from whence the combined force, in presence of an immense concourse of spectators, whose acclamations rent the skies, passed under the walls of the Seraglio, and swept majestically through the classic stream of the Hellespont. The effect of the passage of so vast an armament through the beautiful scenery of the straits, was much enhanced by the brilliancy of the sun, which shone in unclouded splendour on its full-spread sails; the placid surface of the water reflected alike the Russian masts and the Turkish minarets; and the multitude, both European and Mussulman, were never weary of admiring the magnificent spectacle, which so forcibly imprinted upon their minds a sense of the extraordinary alliance which the French Revolution had produced, and the slumber in which it had plunged national antipathies the most violent, and religious discord the most inveterate. The combined squadrons, not being required on the coast of Egypt, steered for the island of Corfu, and immediately established a rigorous blockade of its fortress and noble harbour, which soon began to feel the want of provisions. Already, without any formal treaty, the courts of St Petersburg, London, and Constantinople acted in concert, and the basis of a triple alliance was laid, and sent to their respective courts for ratification.²

69.
Passage of
the Helles-
pont by the
Russian
fleet.

¹ Dum. ii.
160. Hard.
vi. 298.

² Hard. vi.
298, 300.
Th. x. 143.
Dum. ii.
160, 161,

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70.
Critical
situation of
the French
army. Vast
efforts of
Napoleon.

The situation of the French army was now in the highest degree critical. Isolated from their country, unable either to obtain succours from home, or to regain it in case of disaster, pressed and blockaded by the fleets of England, in the midst of a hostile population, they were about to be exposed to the formidable forces of the Turkish empire. In these discouraging circumstances, the firmness of Napoleon, far from forsaking him, only prompted him to redouble his efforts to establish his authority firmly in the conquered country. The months which immediately followed the destruction of the fleet were marked by an extraordinary degree of activity in every department. At Alexandria, Rosetta, and Cairo, mills were established, in which flour was ground as finely as at Paris; hospitals were formed, where the sick were treated with the most sedulous care by the distinguished talents of Larrey and Desgenettes; a foundery, in which cannon were cast, and a manufactory of gunpowder and saltpetre, rendered the army independent of external aid for its ammunition and artillery. An institute at Cairo, formed on the model of that at Paris, concentrated the labours of the numerous scientific persons who accompanied the army; the geography, antiquities, hieroglyphics, and natural history of Egypt, began to be studied with an accuracy unknown in modern times: the extremities and line of the canal of Suez were explored by Napoleon in person, with the most extraordinary ardour; a flotilla was formed on the Nile; printing-presses were set agoing at Cairo; the cavalry and artillery remounted with the admirable horses of Arabia, the troops equipped in new clothing, manufactured in the country; the fortifications of Rosetta, Damietta, Alexandria, and Salahieh, put in a respectable posture of defence; while the skilful draughtsmen who accompanied the expedition, prepared, amidst the wonders of Upper Egypt, the magnificent work which, under the auspices of Denon, has immortalised the expedition.¹

As soon as the inundation of the Nile had subsided,

¹ Dum. ii.
172, 173,
184, 185.
Sav. i. 66, 67.
Bour. ii.
162, 163.
Th. x. 142,
143.

Desaix commenced his march to Upper Egypt, to pursue the broken remains of Mourad Bey's corps. On the 7th October, he came up with the enemy, consisting of four thousand Mamelukes and Arabs, and six thousand Fellahs, stationed in the village of Sidiman. The French were not more than two thousand three hundred strong: they formed three squares, and received the charges of the enemy as at the battle of the pyramids, of which this action in all its parts was a repetition on a smaller scale. The smallest square, however, was broken by the impetuous shock of the Mamelukes; but the soldiers, with admirable presence of mind, fell on their faces, so that the loss was not so great as might have been expected.* All the efforts of the cavalry failed against the steady sides of the larger squares; and at length, the Mamelukes being broken and dispersed, the village was stormed with great slaughter, and the soldiers returned to take a severe vengeance on a body of the enemy, who during the assault had committed great carnage on those wounded in the broken square. This action was more bloody than any which had yet occurred in Egypt; the French having lost three hundred and forty men killed, and one hundred and sixty wounded; a great proportion, when every life was precious, and no means of replacing it existed. It was decisive, however, of the fate of Upper Egypt. Desaix continued steadily to advance, driving his indefatigable opponents before him; the rose-covered fields of Fayoum, the Lake Moeris, the City of the Dead, were successively visited; another cloud of Mamelukes was dispersed by the rolling fire of the French at Samanhout; and at length the ruins of Luxor opened to their view, and the astonished soldiers gazed on the avenues of sphinxes,¹ gigantic remains of

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71.
Expedition
of Desaix
to Upper
Egypt.

¹ Sav. i. 69,
70, 91. Jom.
xi. 422. Th.
x. 379, 380.

* On this, as on other occasions, the scientific characters and draughtsmen who attended the army, were huddled with the baggage into the centre, as the only place of security, the moment that the enemy appeared. No sooner were the Mameluke horse descried, than the word was given, "Form square; artillery to the angles; asses and *savans* to the centre;" a command which afforded no small merriment to the soldiers, and made them call the asses *demi-savans*.—LAS CASES, i. 225.

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temples, obelisks, and sepulchral monuments, which are destined to perpetuate to the end of the world the glories of the city of Thebes.

72.

Bloody suppression of a revolt at Cairo.

Oct. 21.

While Desaix was thus extending the French dominion towards the cataracts of the Nile, a dangerous revolt was extinguished in blood in the centre of Egypt. Notwithstanding all the efforts of Napoleon to conciliate the Mussulman population, the Beys still retained a considerable influence over them, and the declaration of war by the Porte revived the spirit of religious hostility, which he had been at such pains to allay. In the end of October, the insurrection broke out, at a time when the French were so far from suspecting their danger, that they had very few troops within the town. Dupuis, the commander of the city, who proceeded with a feeble escort to quell the tumult, was slain, with several of his officers; a vast number of insulated Frenchmen were murdered, and the house of General Caffarelli was besieged and forced. The *alarme* was immediately beat in the streets; several battalions in the neighbourhood entered the town; the citadel began to bombard the most populous quarters; and the Turks, driven into the principal mosques, prepared for a desperate resistance. During the night they barricaded their posts, and the Arabs advanced from the desert to support their efforts; but it was all in vain. The French commander drove back the Bedouins into the inundation of the Nile; the mosques were forced; the buildings which sheltered the insurgents battered down or destroyed; and, after the slaughter of above five thousand of the inhabitants, and the conflagration of a considerable part of the city, Cairo submitted to the conqueror. This terrible disaster, with the cruel executions which followed it, struck such a terror into the Mahometan population, that they never after made the smallest attempt to get quit of the French authority.¹

¹ Dum. ii. 176, 177.
Jom. x. 423,
424. Bour.
ii. 182.

Meanwhile Napoleon made an expedition in person to Suez, in order to inspect the line of the Roman canal,

which united the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. At that place he visited the harbour, gave orders for the construction of new works, and the formation of an infant marine; and passed the Red Sea in a dry channel, when the tide was out, on the identical ground which had been traversed, three thousand years before, by the children of Israel. Having refreshed himself at the fountains which still bear the name of the Wells of Moses, at the foot of Mount Sinai, and visited a great reservoir, constructed by the Venetians in the sixteenth century, he returned to repass to the African side. It was dark when he reached the shore; and in crossing the sands, as the tide was flowing, they wandered from the right path, and were for some time exposed to the most imminent danger. Already the water was up to their middle, and still rapidly flowing, when the presence of mind of Napoleon extricated them from their perilous situation. He caused his escort to go in different directions, and any one to shout when he found the depth of water increasing, and that he had lost his footing; by this means it was discovered in what quarter the slope of the shore ascended, and the party at length gained the coast of Egypt. "Had I perished in that manner, like Pharaoh," said Napoleon, "it would have furnished all the preachers of Christendom with a magnificent text against me."¹

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73.

Expedition
of Napoleon
to the Red
Sea.¹ Bour. ii.
195, 196.
Las Cas. i.
226. Sav. i.
99.

The suppression of the revolt drew from Napoleon one of those singular proclamations which are so characteristic of the vague ambition of his mind;—"Scheiks, Ulemas, Orators of the Mosque, teach the people, that those who become my enemies shall have no refuge in this world or the next. Is there any one so blind as not to see that I am the Man of Destiny? Make the people understand that from the beginning of time it was ordained, that, having destroyed the enemies of Islamism, and vanquished the Cross, I should come from the distant parts of the West to accomplish my destined task. Show them, that in twenty passages of the Koran my coming is foretold.

74.

Extraordi-
nary procla-
mation of
Napoleon.
22d Dec.

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I could demand a reckoning from each of you, of the most secret thoughts of his soul, since to me everything is known; but the day will come when all shall know from whom I have derived my commission, and that human efforts cannot prevail against me." Thus did Napoleon expect that he was to gain the confidence of the Mussulmans, at the very time when he was executing thirty of their number a-day, and throwing their corpses, in sacks, every night into the Nile. "Every night," said Napoleon, in a letter to Reynier, "we cut off thirty heads, and those of several chiefs: that will teach them, I think, a good lesson." The victims were put to death in prison, thrust into sacks, and thrown into the Nile. This continued six days after tranquillity was restored. The executions were continued for long after, and under circumstances that will admit of neither extenuation nor apology.¹

¹ Miot, 106.
Scott, iv. 86.
Th. x. 394.
Bour. ii.
184.

75.
He resolves
to penetrate
into Syria.
His vast
designs.

Being now excluded from all intercourse with Europe, and menaced with a serious attack by land and sea from the Turks, Napoleon resolved to assail his enemies by an expedition into Syria, where the principal army of the Sultaun was assembling. Prudence prescribed that he should anticipate the enemy, and not wait till, having assembled their strength, an overwhelming force was ready to fall upon the French army. But it was not merely defensive operations that the general contemplated; his ardent mind, now thrown upon its own resources, and deprived of all assistance from Europe, reindulged his visions of oriental conquest. To advance into Syria with a part of his troops, and rouse the population of that country and Asia Minor against the Turkish rule; assemble an army of fifteen thousand French veterans, and a hundred thousand Asiatic auxiliaries on the Euphrates, and overawe at once Persia, Turkey, and India, formed the splendid project which filled his imagination. His eyes were continually fixed on the deserts which separated Asia Minor from Persia; he had sounded the dispositions of the Persian court, and ascertained that, for a sum of

money, they were willing to allow the passage of his army through their territories; and he confidently expected to renew the march of Alexander, from the shores of the Nile to those of the Ganges. Having overrun India, and established a colossal reputation, he projected returning to Europe, attacking Turkey and Austria with the whole forces of the East, and establishing an empire, greater than that of the Romans, in the centre of European civilisation. Full of these ideas, he wrote to Tippoo Saib, that "he had arrived on the shores of the Red Sea with an innumerable and invincible army, and inviting him to send a confidential person to Suez, to concert measures for the destruction of the British power in Hindostan."¹

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Jan. 9, 1799.

¹ Bour. ii.

188, 189.

Nap. ii. 300,

301, and

Corresp.

Conf. vi.

192.

The forces, however, which the French general could command for the Syrian expedition, were by no means commensurate with these magnificent projects. They consisted only of thirteen thousand men; for although the army had been recruited by above three thousand prisoners, sent back with misplaced and undeserved generosity by the British after the battle of the Nile, and almost all the sailors of the transports, yet such were the losses which had been sustained since the period when they landed, by fatigue, sickness, and the sword, that no larger number could be spared from the defence of Egypt. These, with nine hundred cavalry, and forty-nine pieces of cannon, constituted the whole force with which Napoleon expected to change the face of the world; while the reserves left on the banks of the Nile did not exceed in all sixteen thousand men. The artillery designed for the siege of Acre, the capital of the Pasha Djezzar, was put on board three frigates at Alexandria; and orders were despatched to Villeneuve at Malta to endeavour to escape the vigilance of the English cruisers, and come to support the maritime operations.²

76.

Limited extent of his forces.

² Miot, 111.

Jom. xi. 397.

400. Dum.

ii. 186, 190.

On the 11th February, the army commenced its march over the desert which separates Africa from Asia. The

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77.
Passage of
the Syrian
Desert.
11th Feb.

Feb. 28.

track, otherwise imperceptible amidst the shifting sand, was distinctly marked by innumerable skeletons of men and animals, which had perished on that solitary pathway, the line of communication between Asia and Africa, which from the earliest times had been frequented by the human race. Six days afterwards, Napoleon reached El Arish, where the camp of the Mamelukes was surprised during the night, and after a siege of two days the fort capitulated. The sufferings of the troops, however, were extreme in crossing the desert; the excessive heat of the weather, and the want of water, produced the greatest discontent among the soldiers, and Napoleon felt the necessity of bringing his men as rapidly as possible through that perilous district. The garrison were conveyed as prisoners in the rear of the army, which augmented their difficulty in obtaining subsistence. Damas was abandoned by the Mussulman forces at the sight of the French squares of infantry; and at length the granite pillars were passed which, from the remotest ages, have marked the confines of Asia and Africa; the hitherto clear and glowing sky was streaked by a veil of clouds, some drops of rain refreshed the parched lips of the soldiers, and ere long the suffering troops beheld the green valleys and wood-covered hills of Syria. The soldiers at first mistook them for the *mirage* of the desert, which had so often disappointed their hopes; they hardly ventured to trust their own eyes, when they beheld woods and water, green meadows, and olive groves, and all the features of European scenery. At length, however, the appearance of verdant slopes and clear brooks convinced them, that they had passed from the sands of Africa to a land watered by the dews of heaven. But if the days were more refreshing, the nights were far more uncomfortable than on the banks of the Nile; the heavy moisture in the night, and the rains of Syria, soon penetrated the thin clothing of the troops, and rendered their situation extremely disagreeable;¹ and, drenched with rain, they soon came to regret, at least for

¹ Bour. ii.
215, 217.
Miot, 129.
Jom. x. 401.
Dum. ii. 190.

their night bivouacs, the dry sands and star-bespangled firmament of Egypt.

Jaffa, the Joppa of antiquity, was the first considerable town of Palestine which presented itself to the French in the course of their march. It was invested on the 4th of March, and the bearer of a flag of truce, whom Napoleon sent to summon the town, beheaded on the spot. The breach being declared practicable, the assault took place on the 6th, and success was for some time doubtful; but the grenadiers of Bon's division at length discovered, on the seaside, an opening left unguarded, by which they entered; and in the confusion occasioned by this unexpected success, the rampart was carried, and the Turks driven from the walls. A desperate carnage took place, and the town was delivered over to the horrors of war, which never appeared in a more frightful form.* During this scene of slaughter a large part of the garrison, consisting chiefly of Albanians and Arnouts, had taken refuge in some old caravanseries, where they called out from the windows that they would lay down their arms, provided their lives were spared; but that if not, they would defend themselves to the last extremity. The officers, Eugene Beauharnais and Crosier, Napoleon's own aides-de-camp, took upon themselves to agree to the proposal,

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1799.
78.

Storming
of Jaffa.
Four thou-
sand of the
garrison
capitulate.
March 6.

* Though resolved utterly to exterminate, if he could, the Pasha of Acre, Napoleon kept up his usual system of endeavouring to persuade him that he invaded his country with no hostile intentions. On the 9th of March he wrote to him from Jaffa, yet reeking with the blood shed in this terrible assault:—"Since my entry into Egypt, I have sent you several letters expressive of my wish not to be involved in hostilities with you, and that my sole object was to disperse the Mamelukes. The provinces of Gaza and Jaffa are in my power; I have treated with generosity those who surrendered at discretion—with severity those who violated the laws of war. In a few days I shall march against Acre; but what cause of hostility have I with an old man whom I do not know? What are a few leagues of territory to me? Since God gives me victory, I wish to imitate his clemency, not only towards the people, but their rulers. You have no reason for being my enemy, since you were the foe of the Mamelukes; become again my friend; declare war against the English and the Mamelukes; and I will do you as much good as I have done, and can do, you evil." The Pasha, however, paid no regard to this communication, and continued, without interruption, his preparations for defence.—See *Corresp. Confid. de Napoléon*, vi. 232.

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¹ Bour. ii.
221, 223.
Jom. xi. 403.
Miot, 272.
Nap. ii. 373.
Dum. ii. 195.

79.
Massacre
of these
prisoners.

although the garrison had all been devoted by him to destruction; and they brought them, disarmed, in two bodies, the one consisting of two thousand five hundred men, the other of fifteen hundred, to the general's headquarters. Napoleon received them with a stern and relentless air, and expressed the greatest indignation against his aides-de-camp, for encumbering him with such a body of prisoners in the famished condition of the army. The unhappy wretches were made to sit down, with their hands tied behind their backs, in front of the tents; despair was already painted on their countenances. They uttered no cries, but seemed resigned to death, with the patience which is in so peculiar a manner the characteristic of Asiatic habits and predestinarian belief. The French gave them biscuit and water; and a council of war was summoned to deliberate on their fate.¹

For two days the terrible question was debated, what was to be done with these captives; and the French officers approached it without any predisposition to cruel measures. But the difficulties were represented as insurmountable on the side of humanity. If they sent them back, it was said, to Egypt, a considerable detachment would be required to guard so large a body of captives, and that could ill be spared from the army in its present situation: if they gave them their liberty, they would forthwith join the garrison of Acre, or the clouds of Arabs, who already hung on the flanks of the army; if they were incorporated unarmed in the ranks, the prisoners would add grievously to the number of mouths for whom, already, it was sufficiently difficult to procure subsistence. No friendly sail appeared in the distance to take off the burden on the side of the ocean; hardly adequate subsistence for their own troops, without any foreign addition, could be obtained; the difficulty of maintaining them became every day more insurmountable. The committee to whom the matter was referred unanimously reported that they should be put to death,

and Napoleon, with reluctance, signed the fatal order. It was carried into execution on the 10th March. The melancholy troop were marched down, firmly fettered, to the sand-hills on the sea-coast, where they were divided into small squares, and mowed down, amidst shrieks which yet ring in the souls of all who witnessed the scene, by successive discharges of musketry. No separation of the Egyptians from the other prisoners took place; all met the same tragic fate. In vain they appealed to the capitulation by which their lives had been guaranteed; bound as they stood together, they were fired at for hours successively, and such as survived the shot were despatched with the bayonet.¹

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1799.

March 10.

¹ Bour. ii.
225, 226.
O'Meara, i.
329. Jom.
xi. 404.
Miot, 144,
146.

One young man, in an agony of terror, burst his bonds, threw himself among the horses of the French officers, and embracing their knees, passionately implored that his life might be spared; he was sternly refused, and bayoneted at their feet. But, with this exception, all the other prisoners received their fate with the fortitude which is the peculiar characteristic of the Mussulman faith; they calmly performed their ablutions in the stagnant pools among which they were placed, and taking each other's hands, after having placed them on their lips and their hearts, in the Mussulman mode of salutation, gave and received an eternal adieu. One old chief, slightly wounded, had strength enough left to excavate with his own hands his grave, where he was interred while yet alive by his followers, themselves sinking into the arms of death. After the massacre had lasted some time, the horrors which surrounded them shook the hearts of many, especially of the younger part of the captives. Several at length broke their bonds, and swam to a ridge of coral rocks out of the reach of shot; the troops made signs to them of peace and forgiveness, and when they came within a short distance, fired at them in the sea, where they perished from the discharge or the waves.² The bones of the vast multitude still remain in great heaps amidst the

80.
Terrible
scenes
which oc-
curred
there.

² Jom. xi.
404. Bour.
ii. 225, 227.
Sav. i. 100.
O'Meara, i.
329. Nap.
ii. 373.
Miot, 144,
148.

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XXVI.

1799.

81.
Unpardon-
able atrocity
of this act.

sandhills of the desert; the Arab turns from the field of blood, and it remains in solitary horror, a melancholy monument of Christian atrocity.

1 Jom. xi.
404. Th.
ix. 334.

It would be to little purpose that the great drama of human events were recorded in history, if the judgment of posterity were not strongly pronounced on the conduct of the principal actors in the scene. Napoleon lived for posthumous celebrity; in this instance he shall have his deserts. The massacre at Jaffa is an eternal and inefaceable blot on his memory; and so it is considered by the ablest and most partial of his own military historians.² The laws of war can never justify the massacre of prisoners in cold blood, three days after the action has ceased; least of all, of those who had laid down their arms on the promise that their lives should be spared. The plea of expedience can never be admitted to extenuate a deed of cruelty. If it were, it would vindicate the massacres in the prisons of Paris, the carnage of St Bartholomew, the burning of Joan of Arc, or any of the other foul deeds with which the page of history is stained. Least of all should Napoleon recur to such an argument, for it justifies at once all the severities of which he so loudly complained, when applied in a much lighter degree to himself at St Helena. If the peril arising from dismissing a few thousand obscure Albanians justified their indiscriminate massacre, what is to be said against the exile of him who had wrapt the world in flames? Nothing was easier than to have disarmed the captives and sent them away; the Vendéans, in circumstances infinitely more perilous, had given a noble instance of such humanity, when they shaved the heads of eleven thousand of the Republican soldiers, who had been made prisoners, and gave them their liberty. Even if they had all taken refuge in Acre, it would, so far from strengthening, have weakened the defence of that fortress; the deed of mercy would have opened a wider breach than the Republican batteries. In reality, the iniquitous act was as short-

sighted as it was atrocious ; and, sooner or later, such execrable deeds, even in this world, work out their own punishment. It was despair which gave such resolution to the defenders of the Turkish fortress. Napoleon has said, that Sir Sidney Smith made him miss his destiny, and threw him back from the empire of the East to a solitary island in the Atlantic ; in truth, however, it was not alone the sword of his enemies, but also his own cruelty, which rendered the battlements of Acre invincible to his arms. If the fate of their comrades at Jaffa had not rendered its garrison desperate, all the bravery of that gallant chevalier might have been exerted in vain ; and, instead of perishing by a lingering death on the rock of St Helena, the mighty conqueror might have left to his descendants the throne of Constantinople.*

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1799.

After this hideous massacre, the French army swept round the promontory of Mount Carmel, and after defeating a large body of horse, under the command of Abdallah Pasha, on the mountains of Naplouse, appeared before ACRE on the 16th March. The long files of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, winding along the shore, realised to the amazed navigators of those solitary shores all that the fancy of Tasso had figured of the march of the Sultaun of Egypt.† This town, so celebrated for its long siege, and the heroic exploits of which it was the witness, in the holy wars, is situated on a peninsula, which enables the besieged to unite all their means of defence on the isthmus

82.
The French
advance to
Acre. De-
scription of
that for-
tress.

* Napoleon, and all his eulogists, admit the massacre, but assert that it was justifiable, because the garrison was partly composed of those who had been taken at El Arish. This is now proved to be false. No part of the garrison at El Arish was in Jaffa, but it was conveyed in the rear of the French army.—See BOURRIENNE, ii. 216 ; and JOMINI, x. 403.—O'MEARA, i. 329.

† “ Volgendo il guardo a terra i naviganti,
Scorgean di tende numero infinito ;
Miravan cavalier, miravan fanti
Ire e tornar dalla cittade al lito ;
E da cammelli onusti, e da elefanti
L'arenoso sentier calpesto e trito :
Poi del porto vedean ne' fondi cavi
Sorte, e legate all' ancore le navi.”

TASSO, *Ger. Lib.* xv. 11.

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1799.

¹ Jom. xi.
406. Dum.
ii. 196, 197.
Th. x. 334,
335. Berth.
54, 55.

which connects it with the mainland. A single wall, with curtains flanked by square towers and a wet ditch, constituted its sole means of defence; but these, in the hands of Ottoman soldiers, were not to be despised. The Pasha of Syria, Kara Yussuf, with all his treasures, arms, and artillery, had shut himself up in that stronghold, determined to make the most desperate resistance. But all his efforts would probably have proved unavailing, had it not been for the desperation inspired by the previous massacre at Jaffa, and the courage and activity of an English officer, Sir SIDNEY SMITH,* who at that period commanded the squadron in the bay of Acre.¹

83.
Sir Sidney
Smith's pre-
parations for
its defence.

This celebrated man, who had been wrecked on the coast of France, and confined in the Temple, made his escape a few days after Napoleon left Paris to take the command of the Egyptian expedition. After a variety of adventures, which would pass for fabulous if they had not occurred in real life, he arrived in England, where his enterprise and talents were immediately put in requisition

Biography of
Sir Sidney
Smith.

* Sidney Smith was born in 1764, so that he was five years older than Napoleon. His father, Captain Smith, having designed him for his own profession, the navy, entered him in that service at the age of thirteen; and he was already a lieutenant, at the age of sixteen, on board the *Alcida* 74. He was made commander in 1782; and, besides several lesser engagements, was engaged in the glorious victory of Rodney on 12th April. After the peace of 1783 he was so wearied of the monotony of pacific life, that he entered the Swedish service, where he became so distinguished in the wars with Russia, that he received from Gustavus the Grand Cross of the order of the Sword, and was made a knight on his return by his own sovereign. His ardent spirit, however, could not brook a pacific life; and after a short stay at home, as all Christendom was at peace, he entered the Turkish service, where he acquired that intimate acquaintance with the Ottoman character and mode of fighting, which he turned to such good account in the siege of Acre.

His heart, however, was still at home; and, on the breaking out of hostilities between France and England, he purchased one of the small-rigged craft of the Archipelago, got together at Smyrna a motley crew of English and foreign sailors, and with his vessel repaired to Lord Hood, then engaged in the defence of Toulon, and obtained the direction of the light craft intrusted with the destruction of the French fleet in the harbour, which he achieved with splendid success, and which, but for the blunders of the Spanish officers engaged with him in the enterprise, would have been complete. This brilliant exploit led to his being appointed, in 1794, to the command of the *Diamond* frigate of 44 guns; and, soon after, he so skilfully

² Ante, c. xiii.
§§ 111, 112.

for the command of the squadron in the Archipelago. Having received information from the Pasha of Syria that Acre was to be attacked, he hastened to the scene of danger, and arrived there just two days before the appearance of the French army, with the *Tiger* of eighty-four, and *Theseus* of seventy-four guns, and some smaller vessels. This precious interval was actively employed by him in strengthening the works, and making preparations for the defence of the place. On the following day, he was March 15. fortunate enough to capture the whole flotilla despatched from Alexandria with the heavy artillery and stores for the siege of the town, as it was creeping round the headlands of Mount Carmel; and the guns, forty-four in number, were immediately mounted on the ramparts, and contributed, in the most important manner, to the defence of the place. At the same time, Colonel Philippeaux, a French officer of engineers, expatriated from his country by the Revolution, exerted his talents in repairing and arming the fortifications; and a large body of seamen and

conducted a duty with which he was intrusted, of reconnoitring the Brest fleet under Villaret, which was putting to sea, that he got close to their squadron, and passed in the *Diamond* within hail of one of their seventy-fours without being discovered. In May 1794 he aided Sir R. Strachan in the destruction of a convoy of transports; in July of the same year he made a bold, though unsuccessful attempt, on two French ships and their convoy near *la Hogue*; in the end of September he destroyed a corvette on the same station; and in March 1796 achieved a most brilliant exploit, having with his single frigate, a brig, and lugger, driven ashore, under a battery, a French squadron consisting of a corvette, four brigs, two sloops, and a lugger, stormed the battery, and burnt the enemy's whole vessels, with the exception of the lugger, which fought bravely and escaped.

These energetic actions rendered Sir Sidney the terror of the French coast, and he soon experienced the effects of that feeling, in the treatment which he experienced from his enemies on a reverse of fortune. Being stationed off *Havre-de-Grace* in April 1796, he captured with his boats a large privateer; and the taken vessel was, by the flowing tide, floated into the mouth of the *Seine* above the forts. In endeavouring to haul their prize out of this dangerous situation, the British boats were suddenly attacked by an immensely superior force of the enemy, and Sir Sidney and eighteen of his followers were made prisoners, the *Diamond* being unable, from the dead calm, to render any assistance. He was immediately brought to Paris by the French government, who affected to treat him as a spy, and sent him to the *Abbaye*, where he was detained in close confinement with the utmost severity. An attempt to effect his escape by the aid of the wife of an emigrant, who was one of his fellow-

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1799.

i Jom. xi.
406. Dum.
ii. 197, 198.
Ann. Reg.
28. Las Cas.
i. 232.

marines, headed by Sir Sidney himself, were landed to co-operate in the defence of the works. It is not the least curious fact in that age of wonders, that the engineer officer, whose talents so powerfully contributed, at this crisis, to change the fate of Napoleon, had been his companion at the Military School at Brienne, and passed his examinations with him, previous to their joining their respective regiments.¹

84.
Commence-
ment of the
siege.

The irreparable loss sustained by the capture of the flotilla, reduced the battering cannon of the assailants to four bombs, four twelve, and eight eight-pounders. Notwithstanding, however, these slender means, such was the activity and perseverance of the French engineers, that the works of the besiegers advanced with great expedition; a sally of the garrison was vigorously repulsed on the 26th, and a mine having been run under one of the principal towers which had been severely battered, the explosion took place two days after, and a practicable breach was effected. The grenadiers instantly advanced to the assault, and, running rapidly forward, arrived at the edge

March 28.

prisoners, failed in consequence of the plan being discovered when on the eve of accomplishment, and he was confined with more rigour than ever. He succeeded in getting off, however, by means of fictitious orders which his friends procured, purporting to order his transference from the Abbaye to the Temple. The real stamp of the seal of the minister of the interior had been obtained by means of a bribe; and with such skill was the stratagem conducted by the French officers who were privy to it, that with them Sir Sidney succeeded in getting clear off in company with M. Philippeaux, who afterwards accompanied him to Acre, and was the chief engineer in the defence of that town against the assaults of Napoleon. After remaining some days in disguise in Rouen, he succeeded in getting over with Philippeaux to London in May 1798. His escape from the far-famed prison of the Temple was the subject of uncommon congratulation in England, and he was immediately appointed to the command of the *Tiger* of 80 guns, with which he was despatched to the coast of Syria, to aid in repelling the attack upon that province which was immediately expected from Napoleon. He took Philippeaux with him, who was appointed the chief engineer of Acre; and to the extraordinary skill and undaunted courage of these two men, the defeat of Napoleon at Acre, and the destruction of all his projects of Oriental conquest, is beyond all doubt mainly to be ascribed. Thus, the fate of the world was bound up in the escape of an English and French officer from the dungeons of the Temple.

After his splendid achievements at Acre, Sir Sidney Smith and some of his officers made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and such was the veneration in which he was held by the Turks, that he was permitted to visit the Holy

of the counterscarp. They were there arrested by a ditch, fifteen feet deep, which was only half filled up with the ruins of the wall. Their ardour, however, speedily overcame this obstacle; they descended into the fosse, and, mounting the breach, effected a lodgement in the tower; but the impediment of the counterscarp having prevented them from being adequately supported, the Turks returned to the charge, and, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in expelling them from that part of the ramparts, and driving them, with great slaughter, back into their trenches.^{1*}

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1799.

¹ Miot, 162,
163. Jom.
xi. 407.
Dum. ii. 200,
202. Ann.
Reg. 29.
Th. x. 386.

This repulse convinced the French that they had to deal with very different foes from those whom they had massacred at Jaffa. A second assault, on the 1st April, having met with no better success, the troops were withdrawn into the works, and the general-in-chief resolved to await the arrival of the heavy artillery from Damietta. Meanwhile the Ottomans were collecting all their forces on the other side of the Jordan, to raise the siege. Napoleon had concluded a sort of alliance with the Druses—

85.
Desperate
conflicts in
the breach.
The Otto-
mans ad-
vance to
its relief.
April 1.

City armed,— a privilege never before granted to any save a Turk. He was subsequently engaged in the descent of the Turks, which afterwards terminated in such disaster at Aboukir. His effective naval co-operation compelled Kleber to accede to the Convention of El Arish; and by the vigour of his arm, he sustained the defence of Gaeta in 1806, when on the point of surrendering to the French. He commanded the light squadron in the same year which burned the Turkish frigates in the Dardanelles at the time of Sir John Duckworth's passage; and by the extraordinary vigour of his counsel, and activity of his conduct, he succeeded in extricating the Portuguese royal family from the grasp of Junot and the French army, when they approached Lisbon in 1808. Altogether, the life of this extraordinary man, both by sea and by shore, with Christians and with Mussulmans, in combating kings and emperors, in turning aside Napoleon from Asia, and fixing the first European royal family in America, was so extraordinary as would have passed for romance in any other age of the world; and, if report be true, he found that favour in the eyes of ladies of high degree, which was the brightest reward of the knights of chivalry.—See *Life of Sir S. Smith*, and *Naval Biography*, 478, 493.

* A striking instance of the attachment of the soldiers to Napoleon appeared on this occasion. In the trenches, a bomb, with the fusee burning, fell at his feet; two grenadiers instantly seized him in their arms, and, covering him with their bodies, carried him out of danger. They got him into safety before the explosion took place, and no one was injured. — LAS CASES, i. 235.

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XXVI.

1799.

a bold and hardy race of mountaineers, inhabiting the heights of Lebanon, who only awaited the capture of Acre to declare openly for his cause, and throw off the yoke of their Mussulman rulers. The Turks, however, on their side, had not been idle. By vast exertions they had succeeded in rousing the Mahometan population of all the surrounding provinces; the remains of the Mamelukes of Ibrahim Bey, the Janizaries of Aleppo and of Damascus, joined to an innumerable horde of irregular cavalry, formed a vast army, which had already pushed its advanced posts beyond the Jordan, and threatened soon to envelop the besieging force. The French troops occupied the mountains of Naplouse, Cana in Galilee, and Nazareth—names for ever immortal in holy writ, at which the devout ardour of the Crusaders burned with generous enthusiasm, but which were now visited by the descendants of a Christian people without either interest in, or knowledge of, the inestimable benefits which were there conferred upon mankind.¹

¹ Lav. i. 372.

86.
The French
advance to
meet them.

Napoleon now saw that he had not a moment to lose in marching to attack the cloud of enemies which were collecting in his rear, and preventing a general concentration of the hostile forces by sea and land against the camp before Acre. For this purpose he ordered Kleber, with his division, to join Junot; Murat, with a thousand infantry and two squadrons of horse, was stationed at the bridge of Jacob, and he himself set out from the camp before Acre with the division of General Bon, the cavalry, and eight pieces of cannon. Their arrival was not premature; for the advanced posts of the enemy had already crossed the Jordan, at the bridge of Jacob, and were pressing in vast multitudes towards the mountain-ridge which separates the valley of that river from the maritime coast. Kleber, on his march from the camp at Acre to join Junot, encountered a body of four thousand horse on the

heights of Loubi: but they were defeated and driven beyond the Jordan by the same rolling fire which had so often proved fatal to the Mamelukes in Egypt. On the day following, a grand sortie, headed by English officers, and supported by some marines from the fleet, took place from Acre, and obtained at first considerable advantages; but the arrival of reinforcements from the camp at length obliged the assailants to retire into the town.¹

CHAP.
XXVI.

1799.
April 8.
April 9.

¹ Jom. xi.
409, 410.
Dum. ii. 205.
Ann. Reg.
30.

Kleber had left Nazareth with all his forces, in order to make an attack on the Turkish camp; but he was anticipated by the enemy, who advanced to meet him with fifteen thousand cavalry and as many infantry, as far as the village of Fouli. Kleber instantly drew up his little army in squares, with the artillery at the angles; and the formation was hardly completed when the immense mass came thundering down, threatening to trample their handful of enemies under their horses' hoofs. The steady aim and rolling fire of the French veterans brought down the foremost of the assailants, and soon formed a rampart of dead bodies of men and horses; behind which they bravely maintained the unequal combat for six hours, until at length Napoleon, with the cavalry and fresh divisions, arrived on the heights which overlooked the field of battle, and, amidst the multitudes with which it was covered, distinguished his men by the regular and incessant volleys which issued from their ranks, forming steady flaming spots amidst the moving throng with which they were surrounded. He instantly took his resolution. General Letourcq was despatched, with the cavalry and two pieces of light artillery, against the Mamelukes who were in reserve at the foot of the mountains of Naplouse; while the division of Bon, divided into two squares under Rampon and Vial, advanced to the attack of the flank and rear of the multitude who were surrounding Kleber's division; and Napoleon, with the cannon and Guides, pressed still further round their

87.
Battle of
Mount
Thabor.

CHAP.
XXVI.

1799.

¹ Miot, 176,
181. Dum.
ii. 207. Jom.
xi. 401.

rear in the direction of Nain. A twelve-pounder, fired from the heights, announced to the wearied band of heroes the joyful intelligence that succour was at hand; the columns all advanced rapidly to the attack, while Kleber, resuming the offensive, extended his ranks, and charged with the bayonet the mass who had so long oppressed him.¹

88.
Defeat of
the Turks.

The immense superiority of European discipline and tactics was then apparent. The Turks, attacked in so many quarters at once, and exposed to a concentric fire from all the squares, were unable to make any resistance; no measures, either to arrest the enemy or secure a retreat, were taken; and the motley throng, mowed down by the discharges of grape-shot, fled in confusion behind Mount Thabor, and, finding the bridge of Jacob seized by Murat, rushed in desperation, in the night, through the Jordan, where great numbers were drowned. General Junot had commanded one of these squares which heroically resisted the Ottomans. His valour and steadiness attracted the especial notice of Napoleon, who had the names of the three hundred men of which it was composed engraved on a splendid shield, which he presented to that officer, to be preserved among the archives of his family. This great victory, gained by six thousand veterans over a brave but undisciplined mass of thirty thousand Oriental militia, completely secured the flank and rear of Napoleon's army. The defeat had been complete; the Turkish camp, with all their baggage and ammunition, fell into the hands of the conquerors; the army which the people of the country called "innumerable as the sands of the sea or the stars of heaven," had dispersed, never again to reassemble. Kleber occupied in force the bridge of Jacob, the forts of Saffet and Tabarieh; and, having stationed patrols along the banks of the Jordan, fixed his headquarters at the village of Nazareth, while Napoleon returned with the remainder of the army to the siege of Acre.²

The French cruisers having at length succeeded in debarking three twenty-four and six eighteen pounders at Jaffa, they were forthwith brought up to the trenches, and a heavy fire opened upon the tower, which had been the object of such vehement contests. Mines were run under the walls, and all the resources of art exhausted to effect the reduction of the place, but in vain. The defence under Philippeaux was not less determined nor less skilful than the attack; he erected some external works in the fosse, to take the grenadiers in flank as they advanced to the assault; the mines of the besiegers were countermined, and constant sorties made to retard their approaches. In the course of these desperate contests, Caffarelli, who commanded the engineers of the assailants, was slain, and Philippeaux, who directed the operations of the besieged, died of fatigue. The vigour and resolution of the garrison increased with every hour the siege continued. Napoleon, by a desperate effort, for a time succeeded in effecting a lodgment in the ruined tower; but his men were soon driven out with immense loss, and the Turks regained possession of all their fortifications. The trenches had been open and the breach practicable for nearly two months, but no sensible progress was as yet made in the reduction of the place.¹

At length, on the evening of the 7th May, a few sails were seen from the towers of Acre, on the furthest verge of the horizon. All eyes were instantly turned in that direction, and the besiegers and besieged equally flattered themselves that succour was at hand. The English cruisers in the bay hastily, and in doubt, stood out to reconnoitre this unknown fleet; but the hearts of the French sank within them when they beheld the two squadrons unite, and, the Ottoman crescent joined to the English pendant, approach the roads of Acre. Soon after a fleet of thirty sail entered the bay, with seven thousand men, and abundance of artillery and ammunition from Rhodes. Napoleon, calculating that this reinforce-

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XXVI.

1799.

89.

Renewal of
the siege of
Acre.

May 6.

¹ Jom. xi.
414, 415.
Dum. ii. 212.
Th. x. 339.
Miot, 190,
193.

90.

Desperate
assault of
the tower.

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ment could not be disembarked for at least six hours, resolved to anticipate its arrival by an assault during the night. Accordingly the division of Bon, at ten at night, drove the enemy from their exterior works. The artillery took advantage of that circumstance to approach to the counterscarp, and batter the curtain. At daybreak, another breach in the rampart was declared practicable, and an assault ordered. The division of Lannes renewed the attack on the tower, while General Rambaud led the column to the new breach. The grenadiers, advancing with the most heroic intrepidity, made their way to the summit of the rampart, and the morning sun displayed the tricolor flag on the outer angle of the tower. The fire of the place was now sensibly slackened, while the besieged, doubling their boldness, were seen intrenching themselves, with sand-bags and dead bodies, in the lodgments they had formed, the points of their bayonets only appearing above the bloody parapet. The troops in the roads were embarked in the boats, and were pulling as hard as they could across the bay; but several hours must elapse before they could arrive at the menaced point.

¹ Jon. xi.
416. Dum.
ii. 213.
Miot, 194,
195.

^{91.}
Sir Sidney
Smith enters
the fight.

In this extremity, Sir Sidney Smith landed the crews of the ships, and led them, armed with pikes, to the breach. The sight reanimated the courage of the besieged, who were beginning to quail under the prospect of instant death, and they mounted the long-disputed tower, amidst loud shouts from the brave men who still defended its ruins. Immediately a furious contest ensued; the besieged hurled down large stones on the assailants, who fired at them within half pistol-shot; the muzzles of the muskets touched each other, and the spear-heads of the standards were locked together. At length the desperate daring of the French yielded to the unconquerable firmness of the British and the heroic valour of the Mussulmans; the grenadiers were driven from the tower, and a body of Turks, issuing from the

gates, attacked them in flank while they crossed the ditch, and drove them back with great loss to the trenches. But while this success was gained in one quarter, ruin was impending in another. The division headed by Rambaud succeeded in reaching the summit of the rampart; and, leaping down into the tower, attained the very garden of the Pasha's seraglio. Everything seemed lost; but at the critical moment Sir Sidney Smith, at the head of a regiment of Janizaries, disciplined in the European method, rushed to the spot. The progress of the assailants was stopped by a tremendous fire from the house-tops and the barricades which surrounded the seraglio; and at length the French, who had penetrated so far, were cut off from the breach by which they had entered, and driven into a neighbouring mosque, where they owed their lives to the humane intercession of Sir Sidney Smith. In this bloody affair the loss of lives was very great on both sides: Rambaud was killed, and Lannes severely wounded.¹

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¹ Jom. xi.
416, 417.
Dum. ii. 213,
214. Th. x.
390. Ann.
Reg. 32.
Miot, 197,
198.

Notwithstanding this disaster, Napoleon was not yet sufficiently subdued by misfortune to order a retreat. "The fate of the East," said he, "is in yonder fort; the fall of Acre is the object of my expedition; Damascus will be its first fruit." Although the troops in the fleet were now landed, and the force in the place greatly increased, he resolved to make a last effort with the division of Kleber, which had been recalled in haste from its advanced post on the Jordan. Early on the 10th May, he advanced in person to the foot of the breach, and, seeing that it was greatly enlarged by the fire of the preceding days, a new assault was ordered. The summit of the ruined wall was again attained; but the troops were there arrested by the murderous fire which issued from the barricades and intrenchments, with which the garrison had strengthened the interior of the tower. In the evening the division of Kleber arrived, and, proud of its triumph at Mount Thabor, eagerly de-

92.
Last assault
by the
French.

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¹ Miot, 184,
199. Dum.
ii. 217.
Ann. Reg.
33.

manded to be led to the assault. "If St Jean d'Acre is not taken this evening," said one of the colonels, as he was marching at the head of his regiment to the assault, "be assured Venoux is slain." He kept his word: the fortress held out; but he lay at the foot of the walls.¹

93.
Napoleon
at length
retreats.

A little before sunset, a dark massy column issued from the trenches, and advanced with a firm and solemn step to the breach. The assailants were permitted to ascend unmolested to the summit, and descend into the garden of the Pasha; but no sooner had they reached that point, than they were assailed with irresistible fury by a body of Janizaries, who, with the sabre in one hand, and the dagger in the other, speedily reduced the whole column to headless trunks. In vain other columns, and even the Guides of Napoleon, his last reserve, advanced to the attack; they were all repulsed with dreadful loss. Among the killed in this last encounter was General Bon, and among the wounded, Crosier, aide-de-camp of the general-in-chief, and a large proportion of his staff. On this occasion, as in the assault on Roudschouk by the Russians, in 1808, it was proved that, in a personal struggle, the bayonet of the European is no match for the Turkish scimitar. Success being now hopeless, preparations were made for a retreat, after sixty days of open trenches; a proclamation was issued to the troops, announcing that their return was required to withstand a descent which was threatened from the island of Rhodes; and the fire from the trenches was kept up with such vigour to the last moment, that the Turks were not aware of the intentions of the besiegers. Meanwhile, the baggage, sick, and field-artillery were silently defiling to the rear, the heavy cannon were buried in the sand, and on the 20th May, Napoleon, for the first time in his life, ordered a retreat.²

² Dum. ii.
217, 218.
Jom. xi. 417.
Th. x. 391.
Miot, 199,
200. Ann.
Reg. 33.

No event, down to the retreat from Moscow, so deeply affected Napoleon as the repulse at Acre. It had cost him

three thousand of his bravest troops, slain or dead of their wounds; a still greater number were irrecoverably mutilated, or had in them the seeds of the plague, contracted during the stay at Jaffa. Worse than all, the illusion of his invincibility was dispelled. But these disasters, great as they were to an army situated as his was, were not the real cause of his chagrin. It was the overthrow of his dreams of Oriental conquest which cut him to the heart. Standing on the mount which still bears the name of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, on the evening of the fatal assault when Lannes was wounded, he said to his secretary Bourrienne—"Yes, Bourrienne, that miserable fort has indeed cost me dear; but matters have gone too far not to make a last effort. If I succeed, as I trust I shall, I shall find in the town all the treasures of the Pasha, and arms for three hundred thousand men. I shall raise and arm all Syria, which at this moment unanimously prays for the success of the assault. I will march on Damascus and Aleppo; I shall swell my army as I advance with the discontented in every country through which I pass; I will announce to the people the breaking of their chains, and the abolition of the tyranny of the Pashas. Do you not see that the Druses wait only for the fall of Acre to declare themselves? Have I not been already offered the keys of Damascus? I have only lingered under these walls because at present I could derive no advantage from that great town. Acre taken, I will secure Egypt; on the side of Egypt cut off all succour from the Beys, and proclaim Desaix general-in-chief in that country. I will arrive at Constantinople with armed masses; overturn the empire of the Turks, and establish a new one in the East, which will fix my place with posterity; and perhaps I may return to Paris by Adrianople and Vienna, after having annihilated the House of Austria."¹

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94.

Vast designs
which this
defeat frustrated.¹ Bour. ii.
243, 244.

Boundless as these anticipations were, they were not the result merely of the enthusiasm of the moment, but were deliberately repeated by Napoleon, after the lapse of

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95.
His adherence to the same view through life.

twenty years, on the rock of St Helena. "St Jean d'Acre once taken," said he, "the French army would have flown to Aleppo and Damascus; in the twinkling of an eye it would have been on the Euphrates; the Christians of Syria, the Druses, the Christians of Armenia, would have joined it; the whole population of the East would have been agitated." Some one said, he would soon have been reinforced by a hundred thousand men; "Say rather six hundred thousand," replied Napoleon: "who can calculate what would have happened? I would have reached Constantinople and the Indies; I would have changed the face of the world." Splendid as his situation afterwards became, he never ceased to regret the throne which he relinquished when he retired from Acre, and repeatedly said of Sir Sidney Smith, "That man made me miss my destiny."¹

¹ Las Cas. i. 384. Th. x. 392. D'Abr. iv. 268, 269.

96.
Napoleon's proclamation on raising the siege.

Napoleon, who had been hitherto accustomed to an uninterrupted career of victory, achieved frequently with inconsiderable means, did not evince in this siege the patience requisite for success; he began it with too slender resources, and wasted the lives of his brave soldiers in assaults which, against Turkish and British troops, were little better than hopeless. Kleber, whose disposition was entirely different, and who shared in none of the ardour which led him to overlook or undervalue these obstacles, from the beginning predicted that the siege would fail, and loudly expressed, during its progress, his disapprobation of the slovenly, insufficient manner in which the works of the siege were advanced, and the dreadful butchery to which the soldiers were exposed in so many hopeless assaults. Though grievously mortified by this failure, the French general evinced no small dexterity in the art with which, in his proclamation to his troops, he veiled his defeat:—"Soldiers! You have traversed the desert which separates Asia and Africa with the rapidity of the Arab horse. The army which was advancing to invade Egypt is destroyed; you have made prisoner its general,

its baggage, its camels; you have captured all the forts which guard the wells of the desert; you have dispersed on the field of Mount Thabor the innumerable host which assembled from all parts of Asia to share in the pillage of Egypt. Finally, after having, with a handful of men, maintained the war for three months in the heart of Syria, taken forty pieces of cannon, fifty standards, and six thousand prisoners, razed the fortifications of Gaza, Jaffa, Caffa, and Acre, we are about to re-enter Egypt; the season of debarkation demands it. Yet a few days, and you would have taken the Pasha in the midst of his palace; but at this moment such a prize is not worth a few days' combat; the brave men who would have perished in it are essential for further operations. Soldiers! we have dangers and fatigues to encounter; after having disabled the forces of the East, for the remainder of the campaign we shall perhaps have to repel the attacks of a part of the West."¹

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¹ Miot, 204,
209.

The army occupied two days in the retreat to Jaffa, and remained there destroying the fortifications for three more. The field-artillery was embarked, in order to avoid the painful passage over the desert, but it all fell into the hands of Sir Sidney Smith, who followed the movements of the army, and harassed them incessantly with the light vessels of his squadron. All the horrors of war were accumulated on the troops and the inhabitants of the unhappy villages which lay on the line of the retreat. A devouring thirst, total want of water, a fatiguing march through burning sands, reduced the soldiers to despair, and shook the firmness even of the bravest officers. The seeds of the plague were in the army, and, independently of the number who were actually the victims of that dreadful malady, the sick and wounded suffered from the unbounded apprehensions of all who approached them. The dying, lain down by the side of the road, exclaimed with a faltering voice, "I am not sick of the plague, but only wounded;" and to prove the truth of what they said,

97.
Disastrous
retreat of
the troops
to Egypt.

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1799.

¹ Bour. ii.
251, 252,
257. Miot,
215. Dum.
ii. 219. Sav.
i. 103.

tore their bandages asunder, and let their wounds bleed afresh. The heavens were darkened during the day by the smoke which rose from the burning villages; the march of the columns at night was illuminated by the flames which followed their steps. On their right was the sea, on their left and rear the wilderness they had made; before them the desert with all its horrors. In the general suffering, Napoleon set the example of disinterested self-denial; abandoning his horse, and those of all his equipage, for the use of the sick, he marched himself at the head of the troops on foot, inspiring all around him with cheerfulness and resolution.¹

98.
Poisoning
the sick at
Jaffa. It
was justifi-
fiable.

At Jaffa he himself visited the plague hospital, inviting those who had sufficient strength to rise to raise themselves on their beds, and endeavour to get into the litters prepared for their use. He walked through the rooms, affected a careless air, striking his boot with his riding-whip, in order to remove the apprehensions which had seized all the soldiers in regard to the contagious nature of the malady. Those who could not be removed were poisoned by orders of the general; their numbers did not exceed four hundred; and, as the Turks were within an hour's march of the place, their recovery hopeless, and a cruel death awaiting them at the hands of those barbarians the moment they arrived, the painful act may perhaps be justified, not only on the ground of necessity but of humanity.* Napoleon did not expressly admit the fact at St Helena; but he reasoned in such a manner as plainly implied that it was true. He argued, and argued justly, that, in the circumstances in which he was placed, it could not be considered as a crime. "What man," said he, "would not have preferred immediate death to the horror

* Sir Robert Wilson states the number of those poisoned at 580; Miot says merely, "If we are to trust the reports of the army and general rumour, which is often the organ of tardy truth, which power seeks in vain to suppress, some of the wounded at Mount Carmel, and a large part of the sick in the hospital of Jaffa, died of what was administered to them in the form of medicine."—See WILSON, 176; MIOT, 206.

of being exposed to lingering tortures on the part of these barbarians? If my own son, whom I love as well as any man can love his child, were in such a situation, my advice would be, that he should be treated in the same manner; and if I were so myself, I would implore that the same should be done to me." While history, however, must acquit Napoleon of criminality in this matter, the more especially as the Turks murdered all the prisoners and sick who fell into their hands, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the British officers, it must record with admiration the answer of the chief of the medical staff when the proposal for the poisoning was made by Napoleon to him, "My vocation is to prolong life, and not to extinguish it."¹

The army reached El-Arish on the 1st of June, and, after a painful march over the desert, in the course of which numbers of the sick and wounded perished from heat and suffering, at length exchanged the privations and thirst of the wilderness for the riches and comforts of Egypt. During this march the thermometer in the shade rose to 33° of Reaumur, and when the globe of mercury was plunged in the sand, it stood at 45°, corresponding to 109° and 133° of Fahrenheit. The water to be met with in the desert was so salt, that numbers of horses expired shortly after drinking it; and, notwithstanding their repeated experiences of the illusion, such was the deceitful appearance of the mirage which constantly presented itself, that the men frequently rushed toward the glassy streams and lakes, which vanished on their approach into air. It is a curious fact, illustrative of the inconceivable effect of such seasons of horror on the human mind, that while the soldiers who were ill of the plague expressed the utmost horror at being left behind, and rose with difficulty from the bed of death to stagger a few steps after their departing comrades, their fate excited little or no commiseration in the more fortunate soldiers who had escaped the pestilence. "Who would not have supposed," says Miot, "that in such an extremity, the comrades of the unhappy sufferers would

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¹ Ann. Reg.
33, 34. 1. as
Cas. i. 214,
and vii. 221.
Bour. ii.
257, 264.
O'Meara, i.
329, 333.
Miot, 206.
Sir R. Wil-
son, 172,
176. Th. x.
393. Sav. i.
105.

99.
The army
regains
Egypt.

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have done all they could to succour or relieve them? So far from it, they were the objects only of horror and derision. The soldiers avoided the sick as they did the pestilence with which they were afflicted, and burst into immoderate fits of laughter at the convulsive efforts which they made to rise. 'He has made up his accounts,' said one; 'He will not get on far,' said another; and when the poor wretch fell for the last time, they exclaimed, 'His lodging is secured.' The terrible truth must be told: in such a crisis, indifference and egotism are the ruling sentiments of the army; and if you would stand well with your comrades, you must never need their assistance, and remain in good health." Facts of a similar description were very conspicuous during the Russian retreat, and in the Spanish war.¹

¹ Bour. ii.
265. Sav. i.
56. Miot,
220.

100.
Contests
in Egypt
during Na-
poleon's
absence.

May 10.

May 20.

Though Egypt in general preserved its tranquillity during the absence of Napoleon, disturbances of a threatening character had taken place in the Delta. A chief in Lower Egypt, who had contrived to assemble together a number of Mamelukes and discontented characters, gave himself out for the angel El-Mody, and put to the sword the garrison of Damanhour; and it was not till two different divisions had been sent against him, that the insurrection was suppressed, and its leader killed. Meanwhile Desaix, pursuing with indefatigable activity his gallant opponent, had followed the course of the Nile as far as Sleim, the extreme limit in that direction of the Roman empire, where he learned that Mourad Bey had ascended beyond the cataracts, and retired altogether into Nubia. A bloody skirmish afterwards took place near Thebes, between a body of French cavalry and a party of Mamelukes; and Mahommed-Elfi, one of the most enterprising of their officers, sustained so severe a defeat at Souhama, on the banks of the Nile, that out of twelve hundred horse, only a hundred and fifty escaped into the Great Oasis in the desert. This success was counterbalanced by the destruction of the flotilla on the Nile,

containing the wounded and ammunition of Desaix's division, and which, when on the point of being taken by the Arabs, was blown up by the officer commanding it. At length Davoust gave a final blow to the incursions of the Arabs by the defeat of a large body at Benyhady, when above two thousand men were slain. After this disaster, Upper Egypt was thoroughly subdued, and the French division took up its cantonments in the villages which formed the southern limits of the Roman empire. Such was the wisdom and equity of Desaix's administration in those distant provinces, that it procured for him the appellation of "the Just Sultaun."¹*

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¹ Jom. xi.
420, 425,
428. Dum.
ii. 225, 227.
Th. ix. 393.
Sav. i. 96.

Napoleon, ever anxious to conceal his reverses, made a sort of triumphal entry upon his return into Cairo, and published a deceitful proclamation, in which he boasted of having conquered in all his engagements, and ruined the fortifications of the Pasha of Acre. In truth, though he had failed in the principal object of his expedition, he had effectually prevented an invasion from the side of Syria by the terror which his arms had inspired, and the desolation which he had occasioned on the frontiers of the desert; and he had abundant reason to pride himself upon the vast achievements of the inconsiderable body of men whom he led to these hazardous exploits. Notwithstanding these advantages, however, the discontents of the army

101.
Great dis-
contents in
the army.

* Perhaps the private correspondence of few conquerors would bear the light; but unhappily the confidential letters and orders of Napoleon at this period bear evidence of great and unnecessary cruelty. On the 28th June 1799, he wrote to General Dugua:—"You will cause to be shot, citizen-general, Joseph, a native of Cherkene, near the Black Sea, and Selim, a native of Constantinople, both prisoners in the citadel." On the 12th July: "You will cause to be shot Hassan, Jousset Ibrahim, Saleh, Mahomet Bekir, Hadj Saleh, Mustapha Mahomet, all Mamelukes." And on 13th July: "You will cause to be shot Lachin and Emir Mahomet, Mamelukes." What crimes these persons had been guilty of towards the French army does not appear; but from the circumstance of their execution being intrusted to the French officers, and not to the civil authorities of the country, there seems no reason to believe that they had done anything further than taken a share in the effort to liberate their country from the yoke of the French; an attempt which, however much it might authorise measures of hostility in the field, could never justify executions in prison, without trial, in cold blood.—*Corresp. Confid. de Nap.* vi. 374, 392, 394.

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increased to the highest degree after the disastrous issue of the Syrian expedition. They did not arise from apprehensions of danger, but the desire to return home, which tormented their minds the further that their return seemed removed from the bounds of probability. Every day some generals or officers demanded, under various pretexts, leave of absence to return to Europe, which was always granted, though with such cutting expressions as rendered the concession the object of dread to every honourable mind. Berthier himself, consumed by a romantic passion for a lady at Paris, twice solicited and obtained his dismissal, and twice relinquished the project, from a sense of honourable shame at abandoning his benefactor. With Kleber, the general-in-chief had several warm altercations; and to such a height did the dissatisfaction arise, that the whole army, soldiers and officers, for a time entertained the design of marching from Cairo to Alexandria, to await the first opportunity of returning home—a project which the great personal ascendancy of Napoleon alone prevented them from carrying into effect.^{1*}

¹ Th. x.
394, 395.
Bour. 266,
267, 298,
303.

102.
Landing of
the Turks
in Aboukir
Bay.

Influenced by an ardent desire to visit the indestructible monuments of ancient grandeur at Thebes, Napoleon was on the point of setting out for Upper Egypt, when a courier from Marmont, governor of Alexandria, announced

* It deserves notice, as an indication of the total disregard of Napoleon and the French army for the Christian religion, that all his proclamations and addresses to the powers or people of Egypt, or the East, at this period, set out with the words: "In the name of the merciful God; there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet."—See *Letters to Sultan Dordour*, 30th June 1799, and 17th July 1799; *to the Sherif of Mecca*, 30th June 1799; *Proclamation to the people of Egypt*, 17th July 1799; and *to the Sultans of Morocco and Tripoli*, 16th August 1799.—See *Corresp. Confid. de Nap.* vi. 377, 391, 402, 436. "After all," said he, at St Helena, "it is by no means impossible but that circumstances might have induced me to embrace Islamism; but I would not have done so till I came to the Euphrates. Henry IV. said, truly, Paris is worth a mass. Do you think the empire of the East, possibly the subjugation of all Asia, was not worth a turban and trousers: for, after all, the matter comes to that? The army would undoubtedly have joined in it, and would only have made a joke of its conversion. Consider the consequences; I would have taken Europe in rear; its old institutions would have been beset on all sides; and who, after that, would have thought of interrupting the destinies of France, or the regeneration of the age?"—LAS CASES, iii. 91.

the disembarkation of a large body of Turks in Aboukir Bay. They had appeared there on the 10th July, and landed, under the protection of the British navy, on the following day. This intelligence was received by Napoleon on the evening of the 15th at Cairo: he sat up all night dictating orders for the direction of all the divisions of his army, and on the 16th, at four in the morning, he was on horseback, and all his troops in full march. On the 23d he arrived at Alexandria with the divisions of Murat, Lannes, and Bon, where he joined the garrison under Marmont, which had not ventured to leave its intrenchments in presence of such formidable enemies. The division of Desaix was at the same time ordered to fall back from Upper Egypt to Cairo; so that, if necessary, the whole French force might be brought to the menaced point. Mourad Bey, in concert with the Turks at Aboukir, descended from Upper Egypt with three thousand horse, intending to cut his way across to the forces which had landed at Aboukir; but he was met and encountered near the lake Natron by Murat, at the head of a body of cavalry, and after a severe action obliged to retrace his steps, and take refuge in the desert.¹

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July 11.

July 14.
¹ Nap. ii.
323. Bour.
304.

The army which landed at Aboukir, nine thousand strong, consisting of the forces which had arrived at the close of the siege of Acre from Rhodes, and had been transported thence to the mouth of the Nile by Sir Sidney Smith's squadron, though almost destitute of cavalry, was much more formidable than any which the French troops had yet encountered in the East. It was composed, not of the miserable Fellahs who constituted the sole infantry of the Mamelukes, but of intrepid Janizaries, admirably equipped and well disciplined, accustomed to discharge their firelock and throw themselves on the enemy with a sabre in one hand and a pistol in the other. The artillery of those troops was numerous and well served; they were supported by the British squadron; and they had recently made themselves masters of the fort of Aboukir,

103.
Force of the
invaders.

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XXVI.

1799.

¹ Th. x. 397.
Dum. ii. 227.
Nap. ii. 326,
328. Wil-
son's Egypt,
29.

104.
Position
which the
Turks occu-
pied.

after putting its garrison of three hundred men to the sword. This fort was situated at the neck of an isthmus of sand, on which the Turkish forces were disembarked; the peninsula there is not above four hundred toises in breadth; so that the possession of it gave them a secure place of retreat in case of disaster. It was the more necessary for Napoleon to get quit of this army, as there was reason to expect that a new host of invaders would ere long make their appearance on the side of Syria.¹

Napoleon arrived within sight of the peninsula of Aboukir on the 25th July, and, though his force did not exceed eight thousand men, including Kleber's division, which had just arrived and was in reserve, he no sooner saw the dispositions of the enemy, than he resolved to make an immediate attack. The Turks occupied the peninsula, and had covered the approach to it with two lines of intrenchments. The first, which ran across the neck of land, about a mile in front of the village of Aboukir, from the lake Maadieh to the sea, extended between two mounds of sand, each of which was strongly occupied and covered with artillery, and was supported in the centre by a village, which was garrisoned by two thousand men. The second, a mile in the rear, was strengthened in the centre by a redoubt, constructed by the French, and terminated at one extremity in the sea, at the other in the lake. Behind the two lines was placed the camp. In rear of all was the fort or castle of Aboukir. The first line was guarded by four thousand men, the second by five thousand, and supported by twelve pieces of cannon, besides those mounted on the fort. So strongly was the mind of Napoleon already impressed by the great destinies to which he conceived himself called, that when he arrived in sight of these intrenchments, he said to Murat—"This battle will decide the fate of the world."—"At least of this army," replied the other; "but you should feel confidence from the circumstance, that all the soldiers feel they must now conquer or die."² The enemy have no

² Jom. xii.
295, 296.
Th. x. 399.
Nap. ii. 331,
332. Dum.
ii. 232.
Miot, 249.

cavalry; ours is brave; and be assured, if ever infantry were charged to the teeth by cavalry, the Turks shall be to-morrow by mine."

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The dispositions of the general were speedily made. Lannes, with two thousand men, attacked the left of the first line; d'Estaing, with the like force, the right; while Murat, whose cavalry was arranged in three divisions, was destined at once to pierce the centre and turn both wings, so as to cut off all communication with the reserve in the second intrenchment. These measures were ere long crowned with success. The Turks maintained their ground on the height on the left, till they saw it turned by Murat's cavalry; but the moment that was done, they fled in confusion to the second line, and, being charged in their flight by the French horse, rushed tumultuously into the water, where almost the whole were either drowned or cut down by grape-shot. The same thing occurred at the other extremity of the line. D'Estaing attacked the height on the right, while the other division of Murat's cavalry turned it. The Turks broke at the first onset, and were driven by Murat into the sea. Lannes and d'Estaing, now united, attacked the village in the centre. The Janizaries defended themselves bravely, calculating on being supported from the second line; but the column detached for that purpose from the fort of Aboukir having been charged in the interval between the two lines, and routed by Murat, the village was at length carried with the bayonet, and its defenders, who refused all quarter, put to the sword, or drowned in the water.¹

105.
Napoleon's
dispositions
for an at-
tack. First
line carried.

¹ Th. x. 400.
Jom. xii.
298. Nap.
ii. 334.

The extraordinary success of this first attack inspired Napoleon with the hope that, by repeating the same manœuvre with the second, the whole remainder of the army might be destroyed. For this purpose, after allowing a few hours' repose to the troops, and establishing a battery to protect their operations, he commenced a new attack upon the interior and more formidable line of defence. On the right a trench joined the fort of Aboukir

106.
Desperate
contest be-
tween the
lines.

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to the sea; but on the left it was not carried quite so far, leaving a small open space between the intrenchment and the lake Maadich. Napoleon's dispositions were made accordingly. On his left d'Estaing was to attack the intrenchment, while the principal effort was directed against the enemy's left, where the whole cavalry, marching under cover of Lannes' division, were to enter at the open space, between the trenches and the lake, and take the line in rear. At three o'clock the charge was beat, and the troops advanced to the attack. D'Estaing led his men gallantly forward, arranged in echelons of battalions; but the Turks, transported by their ardour, advanced out of their intrenchments to meet them, and a bloody conflict took place in the plain. In vain the Janizaries, after discharging their fusils and pistols, rushed to the attack with their formidable sabres in the air; their desperate valour at length yielded to the steady pressure of the European bayonet, and they were borne back, contesting every inch of ground, to the foot of the intrenchments. Here, however, the plunging fire of the redoubt, and the sustained discharge of musketry from the top of the works, arrested the French soldiers: Letourcq was killed, Fugères wounded, and the column, in disorder, recoiled from the field of carnage towards the exterior line. Nor was Murat more successful on his side. Lannes indeed forced the intrenchments towards the extremity of the lake, and occupied some of the houses in the village; but when the cavalry attempted to pass the narrow defile between the works and the lake, they were assailed by such a terrible fire from the gunboats, that they were repeatedly forced to retire. The attack had failed at both extremities, and Napoleon was doubtful whether he should continue the combat, or rest contented with the advantage already gained.¹

¹ Miot, 251.
Jom. xii.
299, 300.
Dum. ii. 234.
Th. x. 402.
Nap. ii. 335.

From this perplexity he was relieved by the imprudent conduct of the Turks themselves. No sooner did they see the column which had assailed their right retire, than

they rushed out of the redoubt of Aboukir, in the centre, and began to cut off the heads of the dead bodies which lay scattered over the plain. Napoleon instantly saw his advantage, and quickly turned it to the best account. Advancing rapidly with his reserves in admirable order, he arrested the sortie of the centre, while Lannes returned to the attack of the intrenchments, now in a great measure denuded of their defenders, and d'Estaing re-formed his troops for another effort on the lines to the right. All these attacks proved successful; the whole line of redoubts, now almost destitute of troops, was captured, while several squadrons, in the confusion, penetrated through the narrow opening on the margin of the lake, and got into the rear of the second line. The Turks upon this fled in confusion towards the fort of Aboukir; but the cavalry of Murat, which now inundated the space between the second line and the fort, charged them so furiously in flank, that they were thrown into the sea, and almost all perished in the waves. Murat penetrated into the camp of Mustapha Pasha, where, with his own hand, he made that commander prisoner, and shut up the remnant of the army, amounting to about two thousand men, in the fort of Aboukir. Heavy cannon were immediately planted against the fort, which surrendered a few days after. Five thousand corpses floated in the bay of Aboukir; two thousand had perished in the battle, and the like number were made prisoners of war in the fort. Hardly any escaped; a circumstance almost unexampled in modern warfare.¹

The day after this extraordinary battle, Napoleon returned to Alexandria. He had ample subject for meditation. Sir Sidney Smith, having despatched a flag of truce on shore to settle an exchange of prisoners, sent some files of English newspapers, which made him acquainted with the disasters experienced by the Directory in Europe, the conquest of Italy, the reverses in the Alps, the retreat at Zurich. At the same time he learned the capture of Corfu by the Russians and Turks, and the close blockade

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107.

Imprudent
irruption
and total
destruction
of the Turks.

July 30.

¹ Nap. ii.

336, 338.

Th. x. 402,

403. Jonn.

xii. 300, 301.

Dum. ii. 235,

237. Wil-

son's Egypt,

29.

108.

Napoleon
is made
acquainted
with the dis-
asters of the
Republic in
Europe, and
secretly sets
sail for
Europe.

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which promised soon to deliver over Malta to the enemy. His resolution was instantly taken. He determined to return alone, braving the English fleets, to Europe. All prospects of great success in Egypt were at an end, and he now only wished to regain the scene of his early triumphs and primitive ambition in France. Orders were immediately given that two frigates, the *Muiron* and the *Carrère*, should be made ready for him; and Napoleon, preserving the utmost secrecy as to his intended departure, proceeded to Cairo, where he drew up long and minute instructions for Kleber, to whom the command of the army was intrusted, and immediately returned to Alexandria. On the 22d August he secretly set out from that town, accompanied by Berthier, Lannes, Murat, Marmont, Andréossy, Berthollet, Monge, and Bourrienne, and escorted only by a few of his faithful Guides. The party embarked on a solitary part of the beach, on board a few fishing-boats, which conveyed them out to the frigates, which lay at a little distance from the shore. The joy which animated all these persons when they were told that they were to return to France, can hardly be conceived. Desirous to avoid a personal altercation with Kleber, whose rude and fearless demeanour led him to apprehend some painful sally of passion on receiving the intelligence, Napoleon communicated to him his resolution by letter, which he was aware could not reach Cairo till several days after his departure. Kleber afterwards expressed the highest indignation at this circumstance, and in a long and impassioned report to the Directory, charged Napoleon with leaving the army in such a state of destitution, that the defence of the country for any length of time was impossible.¹

¹ Bour. ii.
305, 313,
314. Jom.
xii. 302.
Th. x. 405.
Dum. ii. 240.

109.
He steers
along the
coast of
Africa.

It was almost dark when the boats reached the frigates, and the distant lights of Alexandria were faintly described by the glimmering of the stars on the verge of the horizon. How different from the pomp and circumstance of war which attended his arrival on the same shore,—in

the midst of a splendid fleet, surrounded by a powerful army, with the visions of hope glittering before his eyes, and dreams of oriental conquest captivating his imagination! Napoleon directed that the ships should steer along the coast of Africa, in order that, if escape from the English cruisers became impossible, he might land on the deserts of Libya, and force his way to Tunis, Oran, or some other port, declaring that he would run any danger rather than return to Egypt. For three-and-twenty days they beat against adverse winds along the coast of Africa; and at length, after passing the site of Carthage, a favourable wind from the south-east enabled them to stretch across to the western side of Sardinia, still keeping near the shore, in order to run aground, if necessary, to avoid the approach of an enemy. The sombre disquietude of this voyage afforded the most striking contrast to the brilliant anticipations of the former. His favourite aides-de-camp were all killed; Caffarelli, Bruéys, Casa-Bianca, were no more; the illusions of hope were dispelled, the visions of imagination extinguished; no more scientific conversations enlivened the weary hours of navigation, no more historical recollections gilded the headlands which they passed. One only apprehension occupied every mind, the dread of falling in with British cruisers; an object of rational disquietude to every one on board, but of mortal anxiety to Napoleon, from the overthrow which it would insure of the fresh ambitious projects which already occupied his mind.¹

Contrary winds obliged the vessel which conveyed him to put into Ajaccio in Corsica, where he revisited, for the first time since his prodigious elevation, the house of his fathers and the scenes of his infancy. He there learned the result of the battle of Novi and the death of Joubert. This only increased the feverish anxiety of his mind; and he began to contemplate with horror the *ennui* of the quarantine at Toulon, where he proposed to land. His project at times was to make for Italy, take the command

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¹ Bour. iii.
5, 6, 7.

110.
He lands at
Ajaccio in
Corsica:
sets sail,
avoids the
English
fleet, and
lands in
France.

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Oct. 8.

¹ Th. x. 430,
431. Bour.
iii. 13, 16,
20.

111.
Proof which
the Egypt-
ian expedi-
tion affords
of the super-
iority of
civilised to
savage arms.

of the Italian army, and gain a victory, the intelligence of which he hoped would reach Paris as soon as that of his victory at Aboukir. At length, after a sojourn of eight days at the place of his nativity, he set sail with a fair wind. On the following evening, an English fleet of fourteen sail was descried in the midst of the rays of the setting sun. Admiral Gantheaume proposed to return to Corsica; but Napoleon replied—"No! Spread every sail; every man to his post; steer for the north-west." This order proved the salvation of the ships; the English saw the frigates, and made signals to them; but concluding from the view they got with their glasses, that they were of Venetian construction, Venice being then at peace with Great Britain, they did not give chase. The night was spent in the utmost anxiety, during which Napoleon resolved, if escape otherwise was impossible, to throw himself into a boat, and trust for safety to his oars; but the morning sun dispelled these apprehensions, by disclosing the British fleet steering peaceably towards the north-east. All sail was now spread for France. At length, on the 8th October, the long wished-for mountains of Provence appeared; and the frigates shortly after anchored in the Bay of Frejus. The impatience and enthusiasm of the inhabitants, when they heard of his arrival, knew no bounds; the sea was covered with boats eager to get a glimpse of the Conqueror of the East; the quarantine laws were, by common consent, disregarded; and Napoleon landed in a few hours, and set off the same day for Paris.¹

The expedition to Egypt demonstrates one fact of more importance to mankind than the transitory conquests of civilised nations over each other. It can no longer be doubted, from the constant triumphs of a small body of European troops over the whole forces of the East, that the invention of firearms and artillery, the improvement of discipline, and the establishment of regular soldiers as a separate profession, have given the European a decided superiority over the other nations of the world. The

successes, under circumstances still more marvellous, of small bodies of British troops against the vast forces of Asia in Hindostan and the Punjaub, illustrate the same truth. Europe, in the words of Gibbon, may now contemplate without apprehension an irruption of the Tartar horse; barbarous nations, to overcome civilised, must cease to be barbarous. The progress of this superiority since the era of the Crusades, is extremely remarkable. On the same ground where the whole feudal array of France, under St Louis, perished by the arrows of the Egyptians, the Mameluke cavalry was dispersed by half the Italian army of the Republic; and ten thousand veterans could with ease have wrested that Holy Land from the hordes of Asia, which Saladin successfully defended against the united forces of France and England under Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Civilisation, therefore, has given Europe a decided superiority over barbaric valour; if it is a second time overwhelmed by savage violence, it will not be because the means of resistance are wanting, but because the courage to wield them has decayed.

It is a curious speculation, what would have been the fate of Asia and the world if Napoleon had not been arrested at Acre by Sir Sidney Smith, and had accomplished his project of arming the Christian population of Syria and Asia Minor against the Mussulman power. When it is recollected that, in the parts of the Ottoman empire where the Turkish population is most abundant, the number of Christians is in general equal to, sometimes double, and even triple, that of their oppressors, there can be little doubt that, headed by that great general, and disciplined by the French veterans, a force could have been formed which would have subverted the tottering fabric of the Turkish power, and possibly secured for its ruler a name as terrible as that of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. "With the French infantry and the Mameluke horse," said Napoleon, "I would conquer the world." But there seems no reason to believe that such a sudden

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apparition, how splendid soever, would have permanently altered the destinies of mankind, or that the oriental empire of Napoleon would have been more lasting than that of Alexander or Nadir Shah. With the life of the hero who had formed it, with the energy of the veterans who had cemented it, the vast dominion would have perished. The Crusades, though supported for above a century by the incessant tide of European enthusiasm, were unable to form a lasting establishment in Asia. It is in a different region, from the arms of another power, that we are to look for the permanent subjugation of the Asiatic powers, and the final establishment of the Christian religion in the regions where it first arose. The north is the quarter from whence all the great settlements of mankind have come, and by its inhabitants all the lasting conquests of history have been effected. Napoleon indirectly paved the way for a permanent revolution in the East; but it was destined to be accomplished, not by the capture of Acre, but by the conflagration of Moscow. The recoil of his ambition to Europe, which the defeat in Syria occasioned, still further increased by mutual slaughter the warlike skill of the European states; and from the strife of civilisation at last has arisen that gigantic power which now overshadows the Asiatic empires, and is pouring down upon the corrupted regions of the East the energy of northern valour and the blessings of Christian civilisation.



END OF VOLUME IV.

